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## CHANGING MAN





GORKI MODEL SCHOOL, MOSCOW  
The Mathematics Lesson : measuring the room

# CHANGING MAN:

The Education System of the  
U.S.S.R.

by

BEATRICE KING

LONDON  
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1936

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## PREFACE

FOR a number of years after the Revolution I wrote to my friends in the U.S.S.R. saying, "Tell me about the education system, then I will be able to judge of the Revolution." None of them complied with my request satisfactorily, whereupon I decided to go myself, and on each occasion that I have done so it was infinitely worth while. Frequently educationists say to me, "Russia has gone back educationally. There is nothing she can teach us now in the way of methods, so why go there?" In a certain measure their criticism is true. There are more interesting experimental schools in England than any I have seen in the U.S.S.R. But education comprises infinitely more than method. I am being more and more driven to the conclusion, by much observation of schools up and down the country, that method unrelated to social factors and principles is the least important ingredient in the educational dish we serve to our children. It is precisely for the working out of new principles and new conceptions in education that one goes to the U.S.S.R. One goes there, not so much for new ideas, for many of their ideas have been held for years by educationists the world over, but to see how these ideas work out in practice. How does a classless system of education really work? How is the unity between school and life achieved? "Labour is the universal shaft round which education rotates." Can the U.S.S.R. show us how this dictum can be expressed in education without damaging the academic and cultural standards of life? Is equality of opportunity for every child really a gain to the community and to the individual? Is discipline in the school in truth inextricably bound up with discipline and freedom in society? It is to find an answer to these and many other questions that one goes to the U.S.S.R. and not to see some special way of teaching history or arithmetic. One goes there also to be enheartened and encouraged in the attempt to put educational ideals into practice in one's own country.

I have tried to record my investigations as honestly as possible. If I have sometimes seemed over-enthusiastic, it is because the Soviet conception of the rights of all children is overwhelming. I have generally described the best, not because, as I have said elsewhere, I wish to convey the impression that inefficiency, primitive conditions, and even indifference do not exist, but because all those concerned with education recognise one standard only for the whole country—that is, the best. For those who have educational ideals it is worth while making the journey to see these ideals put into practice even if imperfectly at times.

With a fluent knowledge of the language, with many contacts in the U.S.S.R., I was able to go where I pleased and see what I desired. I was frequently taken for a Russian, and it was generally recognised that I preferred being treated as such. Therefore the criticism so often made, that tourists receive special treatment and are only shown what the Government wants them to see, even if true, certainly does not apply in my case. I was never a tourist.

It was gratifying to learn on my latest visit, April–June of this year, that the improvements I had foreseen have actually taken place. The tendencies towards greater freedom of the individual, the simplification of school life, the realisation of various educational and psychological problems which a few years ago were hardly discernible, are now obvious to any observer who knows the country and the language. More than ever I am hopeful of the success of Soviet education.

BEATRICE KING

Ealing,  
July 1986

## THANKS

I WOULD like to take this opportunity of acknowledging the very great debt I owe to Voks (the All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries) in Moscow for making possible my investigation into Soviet education on my different prolonged visits. And with the Moscow Voks I would like to couple the Kharkov Voks, now at Kiev, with its past president, M. Lyubchenko, and its present president, Professor Velichko. To the latter and to M. Gorban, the president of the Ukrainian Educational Workers' Union, I owe the possibility of a serious detailed study of Ukrainian schools. The sweet graciousness of Madame Velichko added much to a very pleasurable stay in Kiev. I do not know that I can ever adequately repay their generosity and hospitality to me. Nothing was impossible, nothing was too much trouble. The Leningrad Voks, too, deserves my thanks. Their kindness gave me the possibility of an intensive study of the Children's Theatre.

I also take this opportunity of expressing my deepest thanks to all those Directors of institutes and institutions, and Heads of schools, who so willingly gave up hours and hours of their time and the time of their staffs to me. It is perhaps invidious to mention individuals, but I would like particularly to thank Mr. Tikho-Gahdy, the Director of the Central Research Institute of National Minorities in Moscow, and Mr. Mournek, the secretary, for making the institute and the professors of the different departments free to me for so long, and enabling me to learn something of the question of national minorities.

The sincere and warm comradeship which I meet whenever I go to the U.S.S.R. makes a visit there a very refreshing and invigorating experience.

. . . . .

My thanks are due to Miss Hyett for some notes on national minorities, to Mr. Birch-Jones for the diagram on page 15, to Mr. Vinogradoff and Mr. Mayorsky for reading the manuscripts, to

the *British Russian Gazette* for permission to make use of articles published there from time to time, to the *Student Movement* for permission to make use of an article on "University Life in the U.S.S.R.," and to *Sight and Sound* for use of an article on "The Cinema in Soviet Education." Acknowledgments are also due to S. B. Ingoulov for use of the diagram showing the organisation of the U.S.S.R.

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**“We cannot limit ourselves to Communist conclusions and learn only Communist slogans. You will not build up Socialism like that. You will be Communists only when you have enriched your minds with the knowledge of all the wealth which humanity has created. . . . If I know that I know little, I will endeavour to know more. But, when anyone says he is a Communist and so does not need a solid foundation of knowledge, he is not, and never will be anything approaching, a Communist.”—LENIN.**

**“The finest conquest of Communism will be a renaissance of art and of the sciences—this is the most sublime objective of human evolution. Marx told us that the only goal worthy of humanity is the greatest possible enlargement of all human faculties.”—LUNACHARSKY.**



## CHAPTER I

### *Education before the Revolution*

It is not generally realised that Russia was one of the earliest countries to have a system of State education. Catherine the Great, influenced by her contact with Europe, introduced free education in 1782. The schools were few and were only to be found in towns. The number of children did not exceed 20,000, but it was a beginning, Alexander I improved on his predecessor. He attempted to create an educational ladder, up which a percentage, very small indeed, of the children of the people might climb from the parochial schools to the university. But education was a menace to autocracy. The two were incompatible, and Nicholas I perceived this very clearly. He therefore issued legislation which forbade secondary education to serfs, workers, and peasants. Higher education was to be reserved for the privileged classes, whose interests were obviously on the side of autocracy. The fight for education fluctuated with the fight for political freedom. The two were in actual fact inseparable. When there were political gains to recount, educational gains were also to be noticed.

Long before there was education for the people the Church had realised the need for it, if only for the preparation of its own servants. In 1681 an ecclesiastical academy was founded in Kiev. From this date onward the Church began to interest itself in the education of the people from motives that were not disinterested. It began by establishing its own schools from its own funds. When in the sixties of the last century the *Zemstvos* set up undenominational schools, the Church took immediate steps to counteract what it regarded as a grave evil, by establishing a parallel system of primary schools supported by the State but controlled by the Holy Synod. The creator of this system was the famous Procurator Pobedonostsev. Primary education was thus administered by two bodies, the lay local

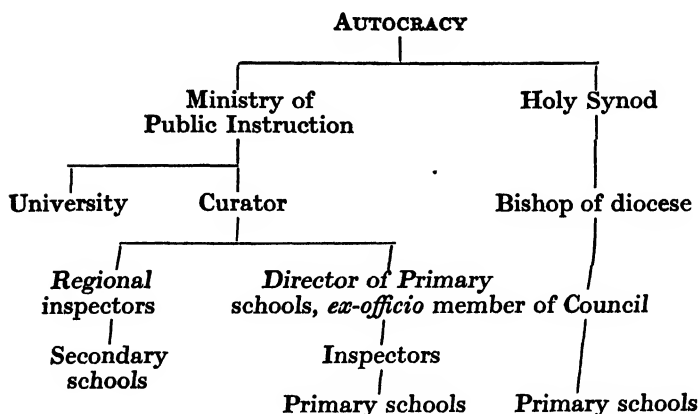
## 14 EDUCATION BEFORE THE REVOLUTION

authorities and the Church, and between the two there was continual warfare, not because the Zemstvos and municipal authorities were revolutionary, but because the Church feared the result of education without religious propaganda. The Government naturally supported the Church, for its schools were not only religious, they were rotten with the most reactionary political propaganda.

*It was not only the Church against which the local authorities had a grievance; they were continually quarrelling with the Ministry of Public Instruction, which meant the Government. The secondary and technical schools were largely supported by these bodies, but they had no say in the management of these schools for whose upkeep they paid. They paid the piper, but, contrary to usage, did not call the tune. All secondary education was under the control of the central Government. The Emperor, in agreement with the Minister of Education, his own nominee, appointed the curators (education officers) of regions, who were autocrats in their sphere. They arranged curricula, appointed inspectors and teachers, and decided the methods of teaching. As the curator also appointed the director of primary schools for his region, which director had similar but delegated powers over his sphere, the reader is left to decide how much freedom there was in the undenominational Zemstvo and municipal schools. To make assurance doubly sure the Ministry of Instruction established a system of private schools directly supported by the Treasury and under direct control of the Government. The watchwords of education were Autocracy, Orthodoxy, and Nationality. The last meant that only Russian members of the empire had educational rights. The diagram on next page illustrates the organisation of Tsarist education.*

It will be noticed that the Director of primary schools is an *ex-officio* member of the Church Council and the influence is of the many over the one.

As can be seen, the universities were directly under the Ministry of Education and, though in theory higher education and learning were supposed to be free, in practice it was far



otherwise. Among the regulations for students issued by the Minister of Instruction were the following:

“ 13. The presentation of addresses and petitions signed by several persons, the sending of deputations, the exhibition of any notices whatever in the name of the students, are forbidden.

“ 14. Within the buildings, courts, and grounds of the university the organisation of students’ reading-rooms, dining or food-clubs, and also theatrical representations, concerts, balls, and other similar public assemblies not having a scientific character is absolutely forbidden.

“ 15. Students are forbidden to hold any meetings, gatherings for deliberation in common, on any matter whatsoever, or to deliver public speeches, and they are likewise forbidden to establish any common funds whatever.

“ 16. Students are forbidden to take part in any secret society or club, or even to join any legally recognised society, without obtaining the express permission in each individual case from the authorities of the university concerned.”

In 1899 a proclamation was issued prohibiting the proposed meetings to celebrate the founding of St. Petersburg University.

It is not surprising that revolts, strikes, secret societies, etc., were a common feature of Russian university life.

When in 1905 the political power was shaken, the religious power felt the shock equally, and the Liberal politicians took the opportunity to push through long overdue educational reforms. All this educational activity, however, was as the faintest ripple on the ocean of ignorance and illiteracy: the mass of the people were entirely beyond its reach. The fine scholarship that existed before the Revolution, the high intellectual achievement, the high artistic attainment, was limited to a very small circle; outside that luminous circle there was a state ranging from twilight to total darkness, particularly in non-European Russia. As education was only permitted in the national tongue, Russian, the inhabitants of the vast non-Russian regions would have been unable to benefit by education had there been any for them. The problem was solved by the virtual non-existence of schools for the national minorities. In Tadjhikistan, literacy was 0.5 per cent, in Uzbekistan 1 per cent, in Kazakstan 2 per cent.

The mass of Russians was not much better off than the non-Russians. The despotic power of the Tsar and the reaction of the Church succeeded in nullifying the attempts of the Liberals to extend education, so that "a table drawn up by Koulomzin, a Russian educational authority in 1904, gives 23 per cent of the population of the U.S.A. at school, 19 per cent of the population of Germany at school, 16 per cent of the population of England, and 15 per cent of the population of France at school! In Russia 8.8 per cent of the entire population was at school."<sup>1</sup> This was in harmony with Tsarist policy. In 1877 the Minister for Public Instruction drew up the first project for universal education. It was estimated that the introduction of the scheme would necessitate the opening of 247,000 new schools and involve an expenditure of 76,000,000 roubles. The comparison of this estimated budget with the budget for the then existing 22,000 schools was a shock from which the Minister and his advisers did not easily recover. "In 125 years from now the

<sup>1</sup> V. G. Simkhovich, *Educational Review*, May 1907.

project might be realised," and this unattainability made it very convenient to shelve the scheme entirely. While England was spending what was even then considered a very inadequate sum, 6·04 roubles per head, on education, Russia was spending 0·5 roubles. The hostility of the Government to education for the people was quite open. "The Minister of Instruction, Shishkov, with the approval of Tsar Alexander and in his presence, made the following statement: 'Knowledge is useful only when, like salt, it is used and offered in small measures according to the people's circumstances and their needs. . . . To teach the mass of people, or even the majority of them, how to read will bring more harm than good.'"<sup>1</sup> Another leading member of the same Tsar's Government stated: "Education should be proportionate to the prosperity of those who are being educated," and "Children of the wealthy classes should be protected from an influx into the schools of children of the poor and middle classes."

A school time-table designed for a primary school where children stayed at least three years is instructive.

|   |   |       |   |      |
|---|---|-------|---|------|
| Religion .....  | 6 | hours | a | week |
| Church Slavonic .....   | 8 | "     | " |      |
| Russian .....   | 8 | "     | " |      |
| Writing .....   | 2 | "     | " |      |
| Arithmetic .....  | 5 | "     | " |      |
| Three hours a week in addition are assigned to Church singing. <sup>2</sup> |   |       |   |      |

In 1914, Russia came nineteenth in the list of countries for world literacy; 28 per cent only of its population could read and write. However much one tries to lighten the gloom of the Tsarist educational picture, it still remains very nearly black. It was indeed a legacy of darkness which the Bolsheviki inherited.

<sup>1</sup> Theresa Bach, *Educational Changes in Russia*.

<sup>2</sup> *Education in Russia*, Board of Education Special Reports, 1909.



## CHAPTER II

### *The Course of Education under Bolshevism*

THE Great War, or the Imperialist War, as the Soviet Union calls it, soon made itself felt in unprepared Russia in the disruption of the economic and social life. Long before the first Revolution starving, ill-clothed, ill-equipped peasants were deserting the front. The Revolution, followed by civil war, intervention on all fronts, and blockade, set up a rapid process of disintegration completed by the famine of 1921-22. It was not till four or five years after the Revolution that the Bolsheviks were in a position to begin reconstruction of any kind, including education. That is not to say that education received no attention before that time. On the contrary, one of the first decrees issued by the Bolshevik Government made education universal and free for all, irrespective of race or creed. The Church was disestablished, and the teaching of religion was banished from the school. Co-education was made compulsory. Lenin was always acutely aware of the two pre-requisites for a Communist society—a very high degree of production, and a very high degree of culture—and he took immediate steps towards the attainment of these conditions.

The position of the country at the time made universal education an aim for future fulfilment. A large percentage of the teachers refused to work under the Bolshevik régime. Many others who continued to work used the opportunity for anti-Soviet propaganda. Schools had fallen into disrepair, and the means either for repairing the old or building new ones were lamentably inadequate. Equipment was almost non-existent. There was shortage of every conceivably necessary article in a school—textbooks, exercise-books, paper, pens, ink, chalk, dusters, etc., etc. Worse still, there were no factories that could be spared to produce these articles in any appreciable quantity. It was not a very hopeful start, but, if equipment was lacking,

there was no scarcity of educational theories. There was the one which offered a very easy solution to all the difficulties, propounded by Shulgin, who argued that schools were quite unnecessary: "Teach the child? Why? The street teaches him; the workshop teaches him; the Party teaches him; why a school?" Shulgin had a not inconsiderable following among the intellectuals who were reacting from the scholasticism of the old school. There was another movement which proclaimed that the family was an obsolete institution, harmful to the children. All children belonged to the State; they should therefore be removed from their homes and put into institutions. Some homes were actually organised for this purpose. Neither of these movements made much headway, and soon both were discredited. Schools were considered necessary, and parents kept their children.

These early days were the days of great freedoms in education as in other spheres of life. Educational experimentation was more than encouraged, it might almost be said that it was compulsory. To experiment became a sign of Party loyalty, and teachers who adhered to the old methods were regarded with suspicion. In these days Russia was the Mecca of every educational crank. Freedom for the children, independence, and self-government became the watchwords. This expressed more than the desire to put theories into practice. Already the connection between politics and education becomes obvious. There were comparatively few Communist teachers, still fewer Communist professors, and those who were non-Communist had not yet proved their worth to the Government. Whatever happened the children had to be given a Communist ideology. How to ensure that with practically no Communist inspectors? Let the children and students, who were already enthusiastic for the cause, be made responsible for the direction of the school and the university. And this actually occurred. The universities and schools in the early days were run by students and pupils. There were instances, even, where time-table and syllabus were subject to their pleasure. The dismissal of teachers and professors as a result of pupils' and students' reports was a common

occurrence. There were many factors which conspired to make this free method only partially successful. There were very few teachers sufficiently experienced in experimental work to make a success of free methods. There was little knowledge about child psychology available to the profession. Many of those who directed education themselves knew little about it. The experimental and research work that had been done before the Revolution was, though good, on a very small scale and had little influence on education generally. Few knew how much freedom it was desirable for a child to have, or what were the limitations of his judgment and experience. There had hardly been time for any serious Communist research work. Slowly, however, order was evolving out of chaos. Soviet educationists were not idle. They had scoured the world for educational ideas. They had found the Dalton Plan and the Project Method, and they judged them good. The fact that there were few teachers experienced in these methods was either not regarded as a difficulty or as one that would solve itself in the process of teaching. The Project Method, at first in its entirety, and, later, modified as the Complex Method, was universally adopted for children of grade 1 schools, eight to twelve years, while the Dalton Plan was introduced for all children from twelve years onwards. This method, too, was slightly modified. As worked out by Helen Parkhurst, and used in America, it was too individualistic for a Socialist country, and, instead of working on individual assignments, children worked in brigades of four to six. This collective form of school life became the dominant characteristic of the second stage of Soviet education. It might be called the brigade laboratory stage. There was much written about the best method of selecting a brigade—whether it should consist of children of equal abilities, children of mixed abilities, and how they should be mixed. It gave ample scope for the indulgence of the Russian love of theorising. Whatever method was adopted, individual responsibility either for work or for conduct ceased to exist. These methods served their purpose at the time: the children were learning, and the opportunity was afforded for the training

of Communist teachers and for the adaptation of the old teachers to the new life.

This brigade-laboratory method applied equally to the universities, where lectures were almost completely abolished. There were seminärs of from twenty to thirty students which received an occasional lecture. These seminärs were divided up into brigades, like the schoolchildren, and most of the work was done collectively by the brigades, the stronger member in each brigade being supposed to help the weaker. A paper was written collectively on the work done by the group, and the group leader would make an oral report, after which there would be final discussion with the supervisor. Let me repeat once more that very few teachers knew how to use these methods either in their entirety or in a modified form. They had not then learnt, and are only just beginning to do so, that the method does not make the teacher—that, on the contrary, the teacher must create the method. At that time they were either not aware or would not acknowledge that free methods require exceptionally skilful teachers. The results inevitably did not come up to expectations.

During all this time observations of the education process and research work were being carried on by research departments in institutes of pedagogy and by research stations, the result of whose work was a continuous modification of the education system. The Five-Year Plan, drawn up to begin in 1928, was not only industrial-economic, it was also cultural, and economic needs affected cultural aims. There was urgent need for skilled workers for the factory and farm. The country could not afford to wait long for these. Education responded to the need of industry and agriculture. Polytechnisation became a burning question; schools for illiterate adolescents, urban and rural, were rapidly increased, as were factory apprentice schools and rabfacs.<sup>1</sup> At the same time the problem of the pre-school child was forced on the educationists, as a result of the influx of women into industry, and plans were elaborated for a network of crèches and kindergartens, or, more correctly, nursery-infant

<sup>1</sup> See footnote on p. 55.

schools. This department of education shows far less violent change than the others. Neither Montessori nor Froebel were at any time adopted in their entirety, and the present system, which evolved gradually, is, with due allowance for Communist politics, very much like that used in the Rachel MacMillan Nursery School plus polytechnisation.

The Five-Year Plan was nearing completion in July 1982 when stock was taken by the Government and the Communist Party. On the cultural side, as on the industrial side, the achievements were considerable. But when the entire educational position came under more detailed review, it was found, though much had been done, much more remained to be done. The success of industrialisation lessened the need for quantity, and it was possible to turn attention to quality. The time had arrived when the standard of achievement in the schools could no longer be regarded as satisfactory. Warranted by the new conditions a higher standard could now be demanded. Not only were there more schools, better and more equipment and apparatus, more educational knowledge (much of this still untried theory), but there were now young Communist teachers and Communist professors to train further new teachers. The old teachers, too, had undergone a reorientation. No longer were they actively, or even passively, hostile. They were now loyal workers of the Soviet State. Gone was the time when it was necessary to set children to watch over teachers, students over professors. Furthermore, there was growing up a generation of youth which took Communism as a matter of course. The time had come for a shifting of the focal points of education. Mere numbers and size were slowly but surely losing prestige. In the process of change in the search for the perfect method the Project Method had been abandoned in 1981. It was considered a failure. Many educationists, including Krupskaya, Lenin's widow, admitted to me that at any rate part cause of the failure may have been the inexperience and lack of training of the teachers. Not so Epstein, the Vice-Commissar of Education. "The method may be suitable for a bourgeois country, but it is quite

unsuitable for a country building Communism. It gave the children a superficial knowledge of a great many things, but no proper groundwork of the foundation of education. Much of their time was wasted in fruitless excursions. They could talk about the railway of their district, or the local industry, but could write neither well nor grammatically. Their arithmetic was in an equally bad state." In 1984, two years later, in discussing this question with Shatsky, whose schools, working on the Project Method, had been highly successful, I found he supported this view. He added that this method could only be used successfully in well-to-do private schools, since it required small classes. It could not possibly be applied to mass schools, and in the U.S.S.R. they had to deal with mass schools for millions of children. The Dalton Plan lasted a little longer—it was abolished in 1932; in this case, too, because it was not considered suitable for the conditions. Two decrees<sup>1</sup> settled educational policy for some time. One issued August 25th, 1932, by the Central Committee of the Party, dealt with primary and secondary education, and the other, issued in September of the same year by the Central Executive Committee of the U.S.S.R., dealt with higher education. They stabilised the changes that had been going on for some time. Dealing with methods, the brigade system was abolished and individual work restored. In schools the class lesson, well prepared, was to be the basic method, but visits to museums, factories, etc., individual work in the laboratory, and, particularly, work with books, were not to be excluded. In the university the lecture was restored. Administration was handed over in its entirety to the school or university director. Self-government is limited to activities and concerns which come within the pupils' and students' proper sphere. (A much wider sphere still than in any other country.) Education, from the apparently undisciplined affair that the early economic and social conditions produced, had now become a disciplined means of producing disciplined citizens of a Communist State.

<sup>1</sup> See *British Russian Gazette*, January 1933.

The decrees further deal with the revision of syllabuses and curricula; with the rearrangement of specialities in institutes; with the introduction of term tests and reports. Most important of all, the seven-year school must be changed into a ten-year school, which change must be complete by the end of the Second Five-Year Plan. My visit in 1934 coincided with the issue of two further decrees over the signatures of Premier Molotov and Secretary of the Communist Party Stalin. The latest decrees deal with the teaching of history and geography. Both these subjects are to be freed from matter which is irrelevant and has now ceased to be necessary. Generalisations and theorising must be based on facts. They are to be taught as subjects very much in the same way as in the general run of English schools. The school of to-day (1936) differs very considerably from the school of 1921-22. It has developed with the developing economic and social conditions of the country. There is the closest interaction between these two phases of the country's life. Education is an excellent barometer of the country's progress. It is claimed in some quarters that these changes have been retrogressive steps, that Soviet education is now like education in any other country. This claim shows an utter inability to comprehend the meaning of events in the U.S.S.R. The changes that have occurred, and that will occur, are minor changes of temporary features. The fundamentals of Soviet education are the same as they were in the beginning. It is still Communist education, and will remain so as long as the Revolution lasts. What Communist education is, I will endeavour to show in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER III

### *The Principles of Communist Education*

"The school apart from life, apart from politics, is a lie and a hypocrisy."—  
LENIN.

THE educational system of any country is conditioned by the economic system prevailing at the time. It is only in the light of this truth that we can begin to understand the peculiar principles which underlie Soviet education. The Soviet economic system is hardly separable from its political system, which arises from the philosophy of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin, the ultimate aim of which is: "From each according to his capacity; to each according to his need." When that stage has been realised the State will wither away and the individual will be completely and entirely free. By the application of the Marxian philosophy of dialectical materialism the U.S.S.R. hopes to reach this stage. Meanwhile it is going through various stages of development.

Dialectical materialism is an all-embracing philosophy. It touches the whole of life. Everything comes within its purview: politics, economics, education, art, science, etc. It teaches that life is a developmental process and is thus subject to continuous flux and change. Marx taught that every social condition has within it the germs of its own decay, its contradictions, and it is out of the struggle between these contradictions that there is evolved the next stage in sociological development. But man is not merely a spectator. The struggle is not objective. Man participates in the struggle. He is not only moulded by his environment; he moulds it. Holding this belief, the Communists have set themselves the task of so altering the environment that there shall arise the new type of man, social and co-operative instead of predatory and individualistic. Planned economy will provide the material means, and education the psychological means, for the fulfilment of this aim. This brings us to the very close connection so apparent in the U.S.S.R. between education,



economics, and politics. It is impossible to separate these three. In point of fact, it is one of the peculiar features of Soviet life that it is impossible to isolate any one aspect of it. Whatever phase one sets out to study, one is immediately caught up by a number of problems which in other countries would be totally unrelated. Whether it be Soviet sport, sculpture, health, or the theatre, each subject will force the student, if he is serious, to pay some attention to economics and politics. This has been the experience of many visitors to the U.S.S.R.

It will be readily seen that the ideals placed before the children of the U.S.S.R. will be different from the ideals placed before children in capitalist countries. I do not think I can fairly be accused of prejudice if I state that the ideal which is generally put before the children in our schools, whether consciously or unconsciously, is that of getting on in the material sense, of doing well and improving one's position. To rise superior to the station in which one was born is accounted a virtue. Let those who think I am wrong read carefully the speeches made by eminent people on School Speech Days. An incident, not unique, at which I was present, will further support my contention. There is in England an excellent music-society which is doing very fine work in developing music-appreciation and music-making among the child population of the empire. It has had as presidents some of our foremost musicians. Its leader for many years was one who deserves the thanks of all who care for music, and who is well known in the musical world. Every year this guild holds a birthday-party for its members, when some 500 children are present from all parts of the country. At the last party at which I was present the leader as usual addressed the children. He told them the fable of the stonemason who became dissatisfied with his work and wished himself a bird. His wish was granted. Soon he became dissatisfied with this state and wished himself the wind, and so on until he came back to his original state. The leader then pointed the moral of the foolishness of dissatisfaction with the sphere in which Providence has placed us. Then as it were to encourage ambition he proceeded: "The story ends

here, but I like to add to it. I like to think that this mason worked now so well that he was made foreman, that from foreman he rose to be manager, from manager he rose to director, and finally to managing director. *That he became rich and greatly honoured.*" There you have the ideal set forth before children, and not by a business man, but by an artist. Now anyone talking like that to Soviet children would, to say the least of it, be regarded with suspicion. There is a story told elsewhere of a teacher who had not yet adapted himself to Communist ideology and phraseology, who set the following problem in arithmetic: "If a man bought a barrel of apples for 80 roubles and sold it for 70, what would he get?" Pat came the answer, "Three months jail." This typifies the attitude which is being inculcated in the Soviet child. The State ownership of the means of production and distribution has abolished the exploitation of one class by another. No one person may employ another to make a profit out of him. No man may live on the labour of others. Add to this the economic security of the individual, and the *raison d'être* for amassing wealth disappears. This has made it possible to replace the individualistic acquisitive motive which characterises capitalist education by the social and co-operative motive which characterises Communist education. The possession of wealth does not bring with it privilege, title, or honour. The man who began as an errand-boy and finished up as a millionaire is not held up to school-children as worthy of respect and emulation. On the contrary, he would be regarded as the embodiment of all that is evil in society. His place is taken by the factory-worker, who, having become a shock brigader, has exceeded the plan of work for his section, by the Pioneer who has exposed the anti-Soviet activities of a kulak, by the airmen who performed such heroic feats as saving the marooned workers of the *Chelyuskin* expedition.

The hallmark of good society in the U.S.S.R. is neither wealth nor title, but enthusiastic and loyal participation in the building of the Socialist State. The community has taken the place of the individual, but the latter is still regarded as the unit from

which the whole is built. The fear has frequently been expressed that this system will tend to destroy individuality. From much observation I can state that the contrary is the case. The society that is aimed at is of a very high type and can only be achieved when individuals are very highly developed. The economic security for the individual, the longer educational period allowed to all children, the flexibility of the system, and the very virulent "change microbe" which lives in the whole Soviet system, as well as the great leeway the Soviets have to make up in all directions, give ample scope and encouragement for the development of initiative and individuality. The possibilities for the development of this individuality are within reach of all the children of the country and not merely of a small number of the privileged class. The facilities for art, music, drama, cinema, for higher education of all kinds, for self-expression in the arts and crafts which are free to every child of the more advanced republics and are rapidly being extended to such distant places as northern Yakutsk and Tadjikistan, should dispose of the fear that, under Communism, individuality will disappear. Nowhere can one see such a variety of children's activities on so vast a scale, so much scope for every child's interest, as in the U.S.S.R.

The Communist leaders have succeeded in inspiring the children with the belief in the possibility of building Communism here and now. This generation which is training for citizenship of a Socialist country, though it lacks the apparent variety of political opinions to be found in similar generations of other countries, has a freshness of outlook, a faith in itself, in its power to change society for the better, an enthusiasm for the Communist ideal, which proves a very exhilarating experience for anyone who comes into contact with it.

*Political Education.* Just as education concerns politics and economics, so do these concern education. As has been pointed out by others, the Russian word for education, *Prosvestchenye* means enlightenment, which word correctly describes what in the U.S.S.R. is understood by education. It aims at producing a

cultured people, and culture in the Soviet Union is an all-inclusive term. It not only includes a knowledge of the arts and the sciences, of language and literature; it includes politics, economics, work, play, morals, manners, and customs. Arriving late at the theatre or concert is considered to indicate a decided lack of culture. This anxiety to be cultured takes amusing forms sometimes. I was informed with great seriousness that to go to the theatre in Moscow without stockings, even though the night was unbearably hot, "was not done." To wear shorts in the street, except in an athletic demonstration, is also considered uncultured.

In spite of occasional absurdities, the Soviet idea of culture does tend to make life a whole. It does not divide it up into so many self-contained compartments. The entire social order is regarded as part of the educational process. The aim of the Government is the aim of the school. Political and economic objectives become objectives of the school. The success or the failure of the Five-Year Plan is of vital import to the school. Education is openly and avowedly political. Publications, the cinema, the theatre, and the museum come under the control of the Commissariat of Education. Use is made of all these in the training of Communist citizens. The process begins in the crèche and only ends when the man or woman ceases to learn. In one crèche I visited, a budding Communist of about two years old gave me the Pioneer salute. A three-year-old girl in my compartment, when travelling from Kharkov to Moscow, informed us that she was a shock brigader and that shock brigaders must write well. The four-year-old daughter of a Soviet citizen, living in London, told her father that she was a shock brigader because she had eaten up all her dinner. Soviet politics even reached its youthful citizens when abroad.

All political anniversaries, all economic drives, such as a special loan, or a sowing or harvesting campaign, play an important rôle in school and club life. They are used as themes around which much of the arts-work is carried on. In the nursery-infant schools they serve as themes for the ordinary

work too. The pencil, the paint-brush, the song, and the dance are all brought into the service of political education. Social science, which means Communist politics—for the very young children it is mostly habit training—was on the time-table of every class until 1984. Beginning with the autumn term of that year, it has been removed as a separate subject for those under twelve years old. In its place has been put history. There has been a great diminution in the amount of political education given in the schools within the last two years. When I visited the U.S.S.R. in 1982, I found politics colouring all teaching, and it was not coloured a pale shade, but a good deep red. The walls of the nursery-infant schools that I saw were decorated with political posters and slogans, pictures of tractors, and Red Army soldiers. The songs I heard were about completing the Five-Year Plan in four. The information given to the children about foreign countries was more than biased—that is common to all countries—it was incorrect. All that was post-revolutionary was glorified, all that was pre-revolutionary was regarded as of little value.

The change which occurred within two years was astonishing even to one who is used to the very rapid movement of events in the Soviet Union. In 1984, I found the walls of the nursery-infant schools decorated with pleasing, ordinary pictures. The songs the children sang were similar to those sung by children in other countries, except that fairy songs were excluded. I listened to history lessons and geography lessons and the bias was no stronger than in many lessons to which I have listened in English schools. "Communist education does not mean filling the children's heads with political catchwords such as 'bourgeois enemy,' 'capitalist exploiter,' etc.," I was informed by the Director of the institute which trains Marxian psychologists for education, industry, and administration. "We have no longer any need to fill the history or geography lesson with irrelevant political theorising or generalisations based on no foundation of facts," said the very same Vice-Commissar who two years before had practically insisted that education must be subservient to politics. I remember how he told me then that, when Communism

has been established as long as capitalism, its political propaganda will be as unobtrusive as it is in capitalist countries. It seems that his prophecy is to be fulfilled, for the propaganda in 1984 was much less obvious, approaching more nearly in its subtlety that to be found in English education. It is worth while examining the claim of Russians that there is just as much propaganda in education in capitalist countries as in Bolshevik Russia. Is it more propaganda to sing the "International" than to sing "God Save the King" or "Rule, Britannia"? If the Russian child learns about Marx and Engels, Lenin and Stalin, the English child learns about Pitt and Disraeli, Baldwin and MacDonald, and similar capitalist leaders. It is true that the English child is not considered fit for modern history till he is much older, if at all; but he has the Press. Where the Soviet child's arithmetic is concerned with the Five-Year Plan the English child's is concerned with rent, interest, and profit. One could continue citing parallels without number, but enough has been said to show that every political system carries on propaganda through education. The difference lies in the degree of subtlety with which it is presented. Every Government tries so to arrange the environment for its children that they shall grow up loyal supporters of its system. It cannot be otherwise.

*Intellectual Freedom.* Political propaganda naturally leads us to the very vital question of intellectual freedom. The unification of the political aims, the vigorous and relentless pursuit of Communism, limit the effective intellectual freedom of the Soviet citizen. No one may organise against the existing system, though everyone is free to *think* as he pleases. Mere thinking without any resultant activity on the part of the thinker, or on the part of those whom his thought influences, is of no consequence and as such can be dismissed from discussion. The question is how much freedom for discussion have Soviet students, professors, and teachers. In this respect, too, a change is obvious. There is considerably more freedom to listen to and discuss unorthodox views. The invitation to Professor Laski to lecture to the Institute of Soviet Law on "Representative Government" was

one of the most significant steps in the direction of intellectual freedom. It may be questioned whether the Law Society in England or any Government institution would invite either Bukharin or Radek to lecture on Communism. The teacher in a Soviet school may not teach capitalist economics or religion. May the teacher in an English State school, or public school, teach Communism or atheism ? It is not so very long ago since a teacher was dismissed from the education service of one of our industrial towns because, being a Quaker, she refused, on conscientious grounds, to take part in the Empire Day ceremony. The closing down of student clubs because the authorities object to the particular brand of politics of its supporters is not unknown in English and other universities. The truth is that complete, effective, intellectual freedom is impossible without economic security for the individual and the State. As long as there is a section of the community whose economic life is insecure it will be a potential menace to those whose position is more or less secure, to those who have wealth and power. The moment the freedom of the insecure threatens the position of the secure, that freedom will be curtailed or taken away completely. It is as well that lovers of freedom should be realists and recognise the true state of affairs, should realise the ties that bind education to the economic and political system of a country.

In discussing intellectual freedom, one is frequently asked about the position of the intelligentsia. At the present time the intelligentsia in the U.S.S.R. needs neither the pity nor compassion of their colleagues abroad. It is nearly four years since Stalin, speaking for the Communist Party, called a halt to the differential treatment, often amounting to persecution, which was meted out to the former intelligentsia. Since then their position vies with that of any group in the country. There is no unemployment among them. There are no starving artists or actors or musicians or authors. They feel as secure as any other worker who is working loyally for the country. There is in Moscow a special club for the old and new intelligentsia, known as the House of the Scientists, a club for all intellectual workers.

It has a theatre which seats a thousand, a cinema, a library where one can see the latest foreign journals, drawing-rooms, dining-rooms, and reading-rooms, such as are to be found in the best European clubs. Its membership consists of those who are 100 per cent Communist, and those who are uninterested in politics. The atmosphere is no more constrained than in any English club. There one may still come across the pre-revolutionary form of greeting of the woman, kissing the hand, not always by elderly men. At one reception at which I was present in the club the concert given did not contain one item dealing with the Revolution or the building of a Communist society. The songs were Breton and Irish folk-songs, the dramatic sketch was a Florentine piece dealing with the love of various nobles for the lady of the hotel at which they stayed or dined. And, while jazz was still frowned upon by good Communists (this was in 1932), the fox-trot was danced quite gaily. And no one looked afraid or hunted. On the contrary, there was much enjoyment and laughter which did not sound hollow. I left at 3 a.m. and I was by no means the last.

*Free Education.* "You cannot build a Communist State with an illiterate people," was one of Lenin's oft-repeated slogans. In order to bring education within the reach of everybody it had to be free. There was a period when money was much scarcer and schools fewer than at present. During that period bourgeois parents had to pay for their children's education. That system has long disappeared and education is now free, from the crèche until a man stops learning. It is free in universities, institutes, and research academies, in music, art, and dramatic academies, in workers' evening institutes and clubs, as well as in all types of schools. It is free for the illiterate and semi-literate peasant or worker, for the factory-worker who discovers he has a gift for art or science and wishes to qualify for the university. A great number of the students in universities have come direct from the factory after attending special preparatory courses in the factory. These are the workers who, owing to the previous lack of schools, were deprived of education in their youth. About



80 per cent of the students taking higher education receive grants sufficient to enable them to live without being a charge on their parents. Should the student be married and have children, a common event, he receives an extra allowance for his children for the period of his study. At the present time the children of the several million disfranchised (the population of the U.S.S.R. is 170 millions)—kulaks, former officers in the Tsar's bodyguard, priests, etc.—are deprived of higher education. But this is already causing some heart-burning among Soviet youth. An article in *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, the organ of the Communist League of Youth, debated this subject and came out boldly on the side of the non-responsibility of children for their parents. In an atheist country, children should not suffer for the sins of their parents. The actual solution to this problem lies in the further provision of higher educational facilities. I imagine that gradually, as economic conditions improve and higher educational institutions increase over the whole Union, the question of origin will cease to have any bearing.<sup>1</sup>

This completely free and subsidised education cannot be compared with the scholarship system in our own country. Our system only enables a small percentage of the workers' children to benefit by higher education, and, generally having received higher education by means of scholarships, they cease to belong to the working class, which is in this way robbed of its best brains. In the U.S.S.R., whatever academic honours a man may achieve, however high his attainments, he still remains a member of the worker class. Thus, not merely the individual, but the whole class is raised. This may partly explain the intelligent interest that everyone takes in education. I found it

<sup>1</sup> On December 29th, 1935, a decree issued by the Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars of the U.S.S.R., signed by Kalinin, Molotov, and Akylov, decrees that the regulation which excludes the children of certain classes of bourgeois parents, and of the disfranchised, from higher education shall be abolished, as there is no longer any need for such discrimination. Henceforth all those who pass the entrance examination to higher educational institutions are to be admitted irrespective of social origin or position of parents. The Higher Technical Education Committee and other commissariats concerned with higher education are to take immediate steps to put the new regulation into practice.

was possible to discuss educational questions such as one would only expect the specialist to be interested in with people of various professions. For example, the commandant of the Red Army Club in Kharkov, whose military rank was equivalent to that of a general, discussed with me the Project Method.

One or two of the numerous incidents that came my way will help to illustrate what free education means in the U.S.S.R. The first occurred in the Leningrad State University. I was interviewing the Director. The door opened and there appeared a girl and boy student. Unabashed by the sight of a visitor, they came in, perched themselves on the window-sill, and prepared to wait till the Director was free. Very soon they took part in the interview. By the time I was ready to be shown round the university we had become so friendly that they both accompanied us. It was then that the youth told me his story, which he insisted was quite common. He had been one of the homeless children on the streets, who had lost his parents. He was taken into a home and given the elements of education and taught a trade. Following the normal course, he went into a factory. While there his ambition for further study was aroused. He attended the *rabfac*, the preparatory course organised by the factory for those wishing to enter a university. He completed his course successfully and was accepted by the Leningrad University. Now he was in his third year, specialising in electrophysics, and was chairman of his sector. Both the students came back to my hotel with me and he insisted on paying my fare, saying quite seriously that he was better off than I.

The psychology lecturer at a pedagogical institute, who was reading for his professorship, had until a few years ago been a shepherd lad on the steppes of Kazakstan. More striking still is the case of a servant of some friends of mine. The husband and wife, being both at the university, needed a servant. They found an illiterate young peasant woman at the station. They taught her to read and write and she attended classes. When my friends were sent to America they put Masha into a factory. About two years after their departure my friend received a

highly technical letter from Masha. She asked for certain American catalogues, as she had heard that American conveyors were much superior to those in her factory. She told how she had attended special courses while working, and that she was now director of the factory and was anxious to have the most up-to-date machinery. The Soviet system has liberated all the latent intellectual and artistic abilities of all the workers, and the riches that will accrue to the country from this liberation can as yet hardly be estimated. One is often asked where the money comes from for all this education, since the U.S.S.R. is still such a poor country. It comes from the State. The profits of industry, instead of being appropriated by private individuals, belong to the State and are given back to the workers in various forms. One of these forms is education.

*Equality.* The classless character of the education is also of great importance. All children go to the same kind of school. Size of classes, building and equipment, are the same for all children. The differences that exist are temporary, due to local difficulties which must disappear, not to any policy that one part of the nation's children requires a much superior type of school than another. The bias may vary, but the curriculum is the same for all children up to the age of sixteen, when specialisation begins. As soon as there are enough ten-year schools, all children will go to school until eighteen. Manual work, which includes an elementary knowledge of practical agriculture and care of animals even for urban children, is part of everybody's education. It is hoped that this training will gradually destroy the division between manual and intellectual labour.

Equality of the sexes is an axiom of the Communist faith. In the educational field it expresses itself first and foremost in co-education, which is the universal rule. The attitude to co-education is not unconnected with the economic equality and freedom of the sexes, which leads to a healthier sex relationship among adults. This in turn influences the children. Girls and boys receive exactly the same kind of education. In all examinations the same subjects are set for girls and boys, men and

women. In the school workshop, where manual work is done, the girls stand at the bench and lathe, handle the tools just as the boys do. The boys are now learning sewing and mending and darning just as the girls are. In the factory apprentice-school the practical work in the workshop, with the exception of certain engineering processes which are considered to be too great a strain for girls, takes no account of sex. It is only where a question of health comes in that sex is taken into account. In the universities it is not considered that a woman student requires less to live on than a man. The grants are the same for both sexes. Neither marriage nor motherhood is a handicap to the woman student. The university hostels have special quarters for the married students and there are crèches and kindergartens for the children that may result from the marriage.

In the schools, girls and boys sit as they please, with due regard to such handicaps as short sight or hard hearing. I was interested to note that generally the sexes tended to sit apart. Physical exercises are taken together even in the universities. It always causes astonishment when visitors to Soviet schools ask questions about co-education, and when Soviet teachers learn that in England it is the exception. The amazement of the head of the Tatar school in Moscow when I told him that we have separate training colleges for men and women was comical. That so highly civilised a country as England should be so backward in this respect was to him simply incomprehensible. My personal feeling is that this question has been over-simplified in the U.S.S.R. I will deal with it in greater detail when discussing sex instruction.

For the teacher, sex equality means equal pay for equal work and equality of opportunity. All posts are open equally to men and women. In the suitability for a post, sex is an irrelevant factor. I have met women in educational positions of great responsibility and I never came across men who objected to working under them. The statement made by a teacher at a meeting of men teachers in England, that one of the reasons why a man could not work under a woman head was that his

wife would look down upon him, caused much hilarity among Soviet teachers. They call that bourgeois psychology. I have been present at many committees and staff meetings and can testify to the extraordinary comradeship and readiness to help that exists between men and women teachers, apparently because they are all working for the same cause. A married woman teacher has six weeks' leave before pregnancy and six weeks after pregnancy with full pay. The crèche and the nursery-infant school, which are at her disposal, enable her to pursue her profession without detriment to her biological functions. Marriage is not considered a crime for which the professional woman must be punished by loss of her post.

The equality that applies to the sexes applies equally to the more than 160 nationalities that inhabit the U.S.S.R. The Soviets do not consider any races to be subject races, therefore there is no discrimination in education. When grants are made by the central authority, considerably larger sums are allotted proportionately to the backward regions. Education must be given in the native language, and gradually, as economic and cultural conditions permit, schools and even higher educational institutions are being organised in the most distant and backward areas.

There were almost insuperable difficulties to overcome. Many of the nationalities had no written alphabet, so that ethnographic expeditions had to be sent to these districts to create alphabets. When, after considerable time, this was achieved, sets of textbooks had to be written, with due regard for local conditions and stages of development. Up to date seventy-four new alphabets have been created. A great deal of study and investigation into local conditions were required before the curriculum could be fixed and the syllabuses drawn up. Both were made very elastic to allow for any necessary changes. The school day was made an hour longer and five years was the period given to reach the stage of the primary school. After some years of education it was found that the so-called backward peoples when given the right environment were able to

catch up with the Russians, and, though the time-table and syllabus for non-Russian schools differ slightly, the period for learning is now more or less the same. The psychological research and investigation carried out by the Scientific Research Institute for National Minorities, in Moscow, has convinced them, so I was informed, of the fallacy of the belief in the hereditary inferiority in the intelligence of backward races. They insist that this inferiority is a result of past economic conditions.

The nomadic habits of many of the nationalities and tribes were and still are an obstacle to a wide education. The problem is being tackled in two ways. At various points on the territories of these tribes or peoples there are cultural stations, some of which are still very primitive while others are very highly developed. Every station has a school, with a hostel attached, for the children of the nomads. In some cases the pupils stay in the school for the whole school year, in others only for the winter months. Where and when it is not possible for the children to attend one of these boarding-schools, the school travels with the tribe. A tent is given up to the teacher for use as a school, and here the youngsters receive their lessons. Great efforts are being made to instil settled habits into the nomads, which it is hoped will help to solve the difficulties of their education.

In the early days the teachers were almost invariably Russian, but even at the beginning the aim was to have native teachers. The Institute of the Peoples of the North, in Leningrad, trains teachers as well as social organisers and administrators for the Far North. Originally it accepted illiterate students; now, owing to the spread of education everywhere, students are required to have finished the seven-year school. The various republics and autonomous areas and regions now train their own teachers, while the Institute for National Minorities, in Moscow, trains lecturers, teachers for technicums, and Heads of schools, particularly for the less developed regions.

So great are the achievements in education for the national minorities that there are now no children between the ages of eight and twelve who are not receiving some sort of education.

Illiteracy among adults is fast disappearing among the settled peoples. Indeed, there are some villages and settlements which can boast of complete literacy. In time, illiteracy will disappear among the nomads too. Through education based on their political philosophy the Soviets have solved the problem of national minorities and backward peoples.<sup>1</sup>

The relations between parents and children are also governed by the principle of equality. The same standard of behaviour is expected from adults as from children. Respect for elders is not a virtue inculcated by the school. It is given spontaneously when elders deserve it. If it is wrong for children to lie, then it is equally wrong for adults. If children are to work hard and learn well at school, then the parents must do likewise in the factory or on the farm, and the children see to it that it is not a one-sided affair. This leads to a franker, freer, and more friendly relationship between parents and children. Soviet children seem to hide nothing from their parents; everything is discussed between them very much like equals. The affection between Russian parents and their children is much more obvious than in western countries. No Russian parents would hand their children over to strangers, as many parents willingly do in England to school authorities, unless compelled by exceptional circumstances. Every school has a parents' association which takes a very active part in the school life.

*Religion.* Soviet education is materialistic in conception and atheistic in outlook. One of the first acts of the Bolsheviks when they came to power was the separation of the Church from the State. Whereas in Tsarist days only one religion, the Greek Orthodox, was tolerated, under the Soviet régime all religions were placed on an equal footing. A curious effect of this for an atheist country was the rise of a number of sects, at least one of which, the Baptists, is very flourishing. The persecution of religious bodies, of which so much was made abroad, was due, not to religion, but to the participation of the priests and nuns in anti-Soviet activities. A regiment calling itself the "Warriors of

<sup>1</sup> For a detailed account of the problem and its solution, see Appendix I.

Jesus," which fought bitterly against the Bolsheviks, consisted entirely of priests. At the present day there is complete freedom of worship outside the school. In *Pravda* of March 1985 a case is reported of a school in a village where the teacher takes the children to church. It appears that the church is some distance from the village, and the parents insisted that the teacher should accompany the children. The local education authority was approached by some zealous atheists with a request for the dismissal of the teacher. The education authority replied that it could not and would not do so, as both the teacher's work and relations with the parents were excellent. There is no likelihood of the education authority being overridden. There is an institute in Moscow for the training of priests. From the schools, religion has been banished entirely. Marxism does not accept any explanation of the universe which is at all metaphysical, any explanation the truth of which cannot be tested scientifically. Its hostility to religion arises, not only from the fact of its untruth according to Marx, but also from the fact that it has always been the handmaiden of autocracy, and on the side of reaction and oppression. General Waters tells how the late Tsar expressed to him his willingness to introduce compulsory universal education. He was unable to do so because of the opposition of the Church. More often than not, religion in Russia was synonymous with superstition, sometimes of a very primitive character. For the mass of the peasants, Christianity was a very thin veneer over pagan rites and ceremonies.

Anti-religion is not taught as a subject in the schools. But, just as religious ideas are inculcated in children in Christian countries, by the way, whether in a lesson or a story or a picture, so anti-religious ideas are inculcated in Soviet children. In the school it takes the form of scientific explanations of natural phenomena, with always a reference to the absurdity, for modern times, of the religious explanation. It would be quite impossible to have in a Soviet school the entire separation of subjects as I have known it happen in an English school, where the Scripture lesson dealt with the Creation, and the geology lesson that



followed later dealt with evidences of the earth's age and formation. The same scientific experiments that are carried out in school laboratories in England, and never related to religion, are used in the U.S.S.R. to discredit religion. There is an instance of a school which produced a rainbow on a fine day with a bucket of water and a hose. This was used to expose the biblical explanation which their parents believed so firmly. The children are definitely encouraged to carry the information home to their families and to spread the truth. At Easter-time in a school I visited the Russian lesson was used to disprove the existence of God. This was done in a more tolerant spirit than I experienced two years before. The Soviet children are not just told that there is no God and all religion is untrue. They are given the history of religion, how and why it arose. They are told why religion was a necessity to primitive man, and why it is no longer a necessity but an obstacle to progress. There are children's books excellently illustrated, showing the different types of gods of different communities at various periods of civilisation. Again the moral is drawn that gods are man-made. Many schools have their atheists' circles with their anti-religious wall-newspaper. Generally one hears much less now of the activities of the Godless Society. Religion is ceasing to be a question of importance in the U.S.S.R. It should be added that, though there may not be any religious classes for children under sixteen, parents are free to teach religion to their own children and to take them to church. The weight of the State, however, is against religion. The Soviet authorities definitely hope that, by means of education, religion will disappear.

The place of religion is taken by the ethics of Communism. Unlike religion in many countries, this ethics is not relegated to one day in the week. It has to be a working everyday ethics as well as a worker's ethics. It must form the foundation of the daily life of every Communist. The effect of Communist teaching has been to unify the moral system of the U.S.S.R. There is not a Sunday morality and a week-day morality; a private morality, a business morality, and a Government morality; a female

morality and male morality. This is of great significance in the education of the child. He grows up in an atmosphere free from moral contradictions. He is enabled to develop an integrated personality. He does not have to subscribe to conflicting loyalties. From the very beginning, life offers him emotional security. He will not have to undergo that psychological shock of finding out his parents. All this probably explains the healthy-mindedness, the constructive vigour, and enthusiasm of Soviet youth.

Stealing, lying, murder, etc., are just as wrong for the atheist Soviet Union as for Christian England. It is the point of view from which these acts are regarded that is different. For the Russians these acts are wrongs against the community and the race, and so cannot be tolerated. For the religious person they are first sins against God, which can be expiated. Soviet children are taught to be moral because a Communist State can only be built by a highly moral people, and not because a deity will punish them for doing wrong. So far as my experience goes, Communist ethics certainly has as good results as religion. As regards social responsibility and a readiness to sacrifice oneself, and frequently others, for the sake of the community, Soviet youth certainly takes pre-eminence over youth elsewhere. Further, Soviet children grow up in an atmosphere which is free from the fear that so often accompanies religion. There is already grown up a tradition of behaviour, and a social opinion which is as potent in the U.S.S.R. as in capitalist countries. It is a positive as well as a negative force and is very useful with the more backward and uneducated people. A member of the Communist Party is expected to be clean and healthy in mind and body and is therefore debarred from excesses of all kinds.

*Planning.* As is well known, one of the characteristics of the Soviet system is a planned economy. This includes educational planning. Gosplan, the State Planning Commission, has a department for culture, which deals with such matters as the percentage of the budget to be allocated to education, the number of new schools to be opened in the Union, etc. The strictly educational planning (curricula, syllabuses, time-tables,

methods of organisation) is drafted in the rough at the centre. Preliminary drafts are sent to regional and district pedagogical stations or institutes, where they are discussed. Further discussion takes place at conferences of educational workers and staff committees. The original plans, with criticism, additions, and emendations, are sent back to the centre. Here the material is analysed and a final report is issued which it is compulsory on all teachers to accept. It was somewhat in this fashion that the new curricula were arrived at. The syllabus allows for variations according to local conditions, but the main lines must be accepted by everyone.

There is constant contact, through the wireless, the Press, correspondence, and personal visits, between the centre and the peripheries. This is gradually bringing within the influence of the focal educational points the teacher in remote places, and helping such teachers to be up to date. Apart from this central planning, each institute carries on its own planning. In 1982, I took part in a meeting of the staff of the Central House for the Arts Education of Children, in Moscow, which was discussing its Second Five-Year Plan. It went into considerable detail, as to the number of children's theatres and cinemas there should be in its region, the number of trained workers they could prepare for this and for children's clubs, etc., etc., as well as budgetary requirements and apportionment of funds. I remember that everyone was anxious to aim high, so as to escape the epithet "opportunist."

One of the positive results of this planning is the security which local educational authorities feel. They can go ahead with their schemes, not fearing any reversal of policy. Another is to be found in the collection and preservation of all that is good in the work of teaching and organisation, and of making it immediately available to the whole profession. It also ensures that successful experiments can be carried on by others than the originator, so that the labour and the thought that have gone to the making of a successful school are not wasted because the originator retires or dies. As soon as a really good school is

discovered, its work is made known to the general public, as well as to the profession, by the Commissariat of Education, and others are encouraged to follow its example. Here lies a danger of central planning, particularly in a country the majority of whose teachers are inexperienced. It lends itself to a mechanical adoption of other people's methods. Another drawback is the compulsory acceptance by all of the final syllabus and instructions. It limits considerably the freedom to experiment. This must be a loss to education. It is probably only a temporary phase, until there is a sufficient number of qualified, experienced teachers, to make freedom safe. It is nevertheless a pity that the Soviet teacher is not allowed to make mistakes and so gain valuable experience. One questions whether a uniform goodness is a desirable thing. The Soviet reply to this point is that, while the country so urgently needs thousands of skilled workers in order to supply the population with the necessities of life, the Union cannot afford to allow its teachers to make mistakes. As soon as industrial achievements permit it, the Soviet teachers will have more freedom than those in other countries.

*Polytechnisation.* The Soviet school is a polytechnised school. It is intimately connected with the whole of life outside the school. The school trains for life, and, since the foundation of life is labour, it is held that the school cannot be separated from labour. The original name for the Soviet school was the Unified Labour School. It then became the seven-year school, and is now becoming the ten-year school, but the word labour is still frequently used in connection with it. Unfortunately the emphasis on labour gives an entirely wrong impression to the foreigner, because the school most emphatically does not train workers for the factory, nor is it anything like a factory. It indicates, however, the Soviet attitude to education: that it must be an integral part of life; and life in the U.S.S.R. in a great measure depends on the factory. In a later chapter, polytechnisation will be dealt with in detail. Here suffice it to say that all schools are so organised that children, girls and boys, do some manual work which must be closely related to the academic

work carried on in the classroom. The children are expected to obtain an understanding of industry as a whole, its place in the social economy, the relations between the worker and industry, man's part in adapting nature, the effects of production processes on the social organism, etc., etc. It cannot be too often repeated, however, that polytechnisation is not vocational training.

*The School as Cultural Agent.* One of the many striking features of Soviet education is the part played by the school in raising the cultural level of the populace. Think for a moment of the backwardness of the mass of the people before the Revolution. Sanitation and hygiene were almost completely unknown. Filth was habitually thrown into the courtyard round which the houses were built, or into the village street. It was a common thing for a family to eat its food with the hands, from a common dish. The U.S.S.R. is largely Asiatic and contains vast territories where the most rudimentary amenities of life were unknown. Let the reader imagine a condition where students coming to a university from rural areas have never seen a modern lavatory and do not know how to use it. Let the reader remember that the Russian peasants, who made up 90 per cent of the population, were, generally speaking, unused to continuous labour and incapable of concentration for any length of time; that their lives were governed by superstition; that drunkenness, wife-beating, and brawling were prevalent everywhere within the empire. These peasants were conservative to a degree, and had all the characteristics of an oppressed and downtrodden people. It is important to realise that the factory-worker of to-day was the illiterate peasant of yesterday. A due regard for all these factors will give the reader some idea of the colossal task that confronted, and still in a measure confronts, Soviet educationists. There was no other solution. The school had to become the educational centre and stimulus for the adults, and the children had to become the teachers. In the first years of the Revolution there were no boundaries set to the children's activities, there was no task which the children did not attempt. They made registers of the

illiterate in their neighbourhood, taught their parents at home, and organised classes for them at school. There was no apparatus. There were no textbooks. In their free time they made cut-out alphabets. They organised concerts, made a collection and with their kopecks bought reading-books and exercise-books. To enable mothers with children to avail themselves of the classes, they organised a children's room in charge of one of the older children. They would descend upon a village where the sanitation was particularly vile, clean up the street, the well, or the river, and then hold a meeting, which they compelled their parents to attend, and bully, cajole, and shame the adults into a promise of an attempt at cleanliness. They took part in every political campaign, distributing literature, addressing dinner-hour factory-meetings, caring for the babies while the mothers went to vote, and so on. They would set forth with banners and band to agitate for full participation in the industrial or agricultural loan. In the summer they helped with the harvest, passed on their scientific knowledge (obtained in the school science-lesson) to the peasant, agitated for collective farming and against the kulak. In the Children's Club in the Trekhgornny District in Moscow is a portrait of one of the youngsters who was killed by kulaks for denouncing one of them. Their work was not infrequently fraught with danger.

Drunkenness was their especial enemy. Did not their parents spend the money that should have gone to food, clothing, and school-books for the children on drink, which always resulted in cruelty and often in crime? Posters, slogans, meetings, processions, were all used in the fight against drink. An authentic incident in a small town will illustrate the zeal and inventiveness of the children. The children's council at the school decided that a stop must be put to the drunkenness of the parents. Most of these worked in the local flour-mill. It was decided to launch the attack there. About eleven in the morning on their weekly holiday they marched in procession to the mill. They entered the gates, surrounded the mill, blocked the exits, and rang the fire alarm. The unsuspecting workmen stopped work and rushed

out into the yard. They were greatly astonished to meet a procession of their own children with anti-drink banners. The chairman of the school council, a fourteen-year-old boy, stepped forth and explained the reason of the attack. He told the parents just what the children thought about drunkenness and that they had decided not to have drunken parents any longer, and asked what they intended doing about it. One of the oldest workmen was selected to carry on peace negotiations. The result was a complete surrender on the part of the parents. The children proclaimed their victory by marching through the town with posters which told how on a certain morning an attack was launched on the mill, how the enemy had capitulated, and how henceforth, as a result of the treaty drawn up, their town would be free from the drink evil.

These children literally worked miracles, but they paid the price in health and scholastic attainment. They became nervy and the educational standard fell far short of what was demanded. In 1982, when the success of the First Five-Year Plan made itself felt everywhere, a halt was called to these too strenuous social activities. A decree was issued, signed by the Commissars of Education and Health, drawing the attention of all educational authorities to the harmful effects of this heavy social burden which the children had shouldered. The number of hours they might give to social activities was limited, emphasis was laid on the number of hours' sleep essential for children. The school holiday was to be a rest day entirely free from social duties.

Soviet children still take a very active share in adult life, in improving conditions. They watch over the behaviour of adults, as the following incident will show. Corporal punishment is a crime in the U.S.S.R., and a child may summon for assault a parent who beats it. Child-beating, like wife-beating, was very prevalent among the uneducated, and has not yet been entirely "liquidated." Misha, the ten-year-old son of an acquaintance of mine, arrived home late from school. On being asked why he was late, he related the following: His class had found out that

day that Vanya, one of their class-mates, had been beaten by his father. Misha discussed this counter-revolutionary behaviour with the Pioneers in his class. It was decided to send a deputation of Pioneers to Vanya's father to convince him of the error of his ways. Four very earnest young Pioneers set off. When Vanya's father, on opening the door, learnt the reason of their errand, he swore at them and was about to shut the door in their face. The heroes refused to budge. They insisted on coming into the room and they talked to Vanya's father. It was not long before he surrendered, and promised to mend his ways.

The children of an orphan home in Moscow make it their business to watch over the slackers in the factory over which they have taken patronage. Very ingenious are the methods they use with workers who think that drinking-bouts and frequent holidays make life more interesting. They will shame them at a public meeting in the factory. They will pay them their weekly wages at a "black" pay-desk, in "black" money. They will put their names up on the factory black list. They will write about them in the factory wall-newspaper. They will make their life unbearable until they reform.

While visiting a factory in Kharkov, I came across a lunch-hour demonstration of school-children from the school over which, in this case, the factory had patronage. Their help had been sought with the campaign for the industrial loan which was then being floated. Though most of the workers had subscribed, I was told, there were still some so utterly devoid of any sense of social responsibility that they refused to bear their share of the burden, though they were quite ready to avail themselves of all the social services offered by the State. About twenty children came with their musical instruments and banners to reform these unregenerates. First there was music, then a speech from the secretary of the Communist Party cell. This was followed by an extraordinarily good speech by a boy of ten. He was followed by two others, not quite so good. Still one or two of the workers held out. The first young orator was again put up to speak, and several workers added their voice to



his. Before I left, the last stubborn worker had fallen into line and was preparing to hand over his money.

When I pointed out that this was practically compulsion, the secretary replied that such people as the stubborn one were only too ready to use all the services for which the rest of them paid, and it was grossly unfair that they should work for him, when he was quite able to pay his share. As the general level of life improves and as the number of cultural adult workers increases, the children's task will become lighter, but some part they will always take in social life.

It is not to be imagined that the generation now being educated will embody all the Communist ideals and bring about the Communist State. It will take several generations of right education to eradicate the marks and signs of superstition and oppression. Culture and a high moral standard cannot be produced in a night, nor can children be given a complete Communist education except by Communist parents and teachers. This condition is still far from fulfilment. However fine may be the ideals and doctrines taught to children by their teachers and leaders, these ideas can only become fully effective when they do not contradict the life and thought of their parents. The home background, cultural as well as material, is a very powerful factor in the U.S.S.R. as elsewhere, and presents a problem none too easy to solve. It is to make 170 million people think and feel totally differently from what they have been accustomed to for centuries. It is a realisation of the enormity of this task that is responsible for the great efforts put forward in the field of adult education. The honest observer must acknowledge that the improvement achieved in a short space of time is so remarkable as to warrant a belief in the ultimate fulfilment of the Communist ideals.

## CHAPTER IV

### *Administration and Organisation*

EACH of the several Republics has its own Commissariat of Education. At the head is the Commissar, appointed by the Central Executive Committee.<sup>1</sup> He is assisted by two Vice-Commissars. There is talk of having an All-Union Commissariat for Education as there is an All-Union Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, Defence, etc., but if this fusion takes place (there seems every reason for it) the central Commissariat will not interfere with local autonomy in those departments of education where it exists now. It will make theory more in conformity with practice. In practice the R.S.F.S.R. Commissariat of Education in Moscow has a deep influence on the other Commissariats, particularly in the more backward areas. It would greatly aid the progress of these areas.

The Commissariat of Education in Moscow is the most complete of all, and more or less serves as a model for all the others. It is divided into departments for the various educational grades—pre-school, primary, incomplete secondary, and secondary, higher education and teacher training; into departments dealing with different branches of education—art, music, science, experiment and research; departments for organisation and planning, finance, etc.; for out-of-school activities, the theatre and the cinema; textbooks, publications, etc.; and for adult education. Working with the Commissariat in an advisory capacity is an Education Commission consisting of experts in different subjects and branches. Working directly with it and for it are such institutes as that of National Minorities, Polytechnisation, etc.

The Central Planning Commission, which plans the economy for the whole Union, has a cultural sector. This plans the education for the whole U.S.S.R., the number of new schools to be

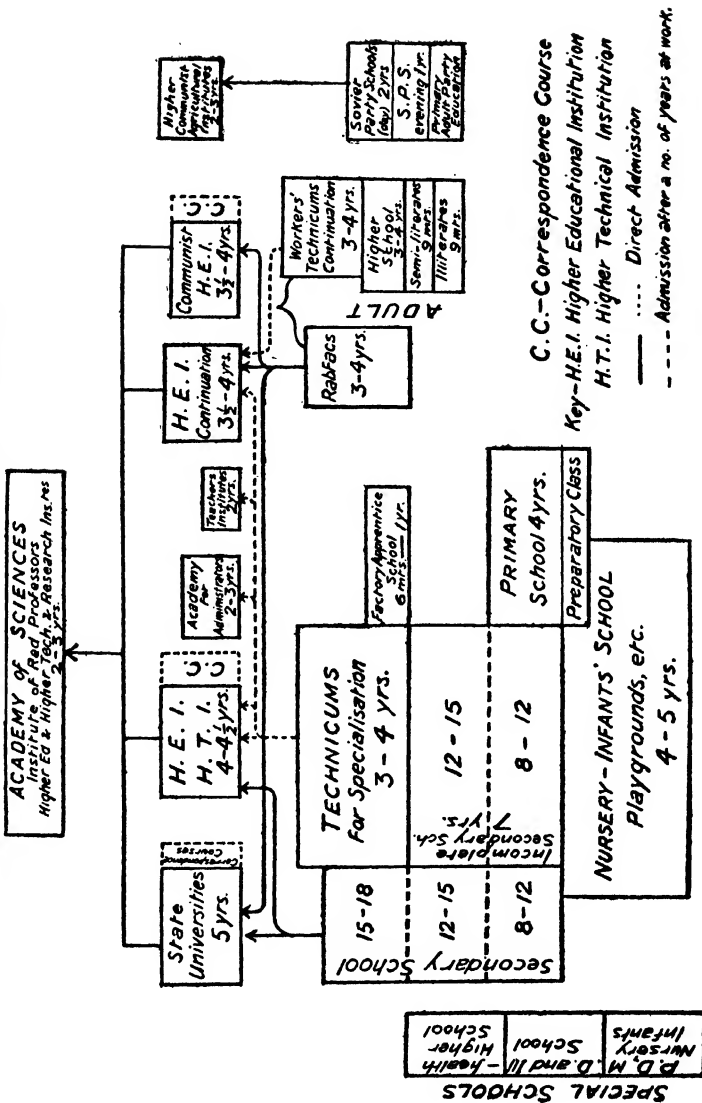
<sup>1</sup> Each Republic has its own Central Executive Committee.

built, the kind of schools, whether nursery-infant, primary, secondary, technicums, etc., the number of new teachers, new libraries, etc. It fixes the sum to be allocated to education to each Republic from the central treasury.

The Commissariats of Education deal with problems which are applicable to the entire Republic, such as the issue of text-books, curricula, length of holidays and school day, etc. The regional, district, and local education authorities deal with regional, district, and local education affairs, such as school equipment, building, and appointment of staffs. The Director, or Head, of a school is appointed by the local authority. The teachers are appointed by the Head, or Director, in consultation with the L.E.A. The Head of secondary schools is called a Director. The entire responsibility of the school, administrative, academic and social, rests with the Head, or Director. He or she is answerable to the L.E.A., to the School Council, and to the Parents' Council. The responsibility for school building is shared between the L.E.A. and the Commissariat of Education. The latter finances teachers' salaries and equipment. In practice there is no hard and fast rule about financial responsibility. Trade unions, co-operative societies, and parents' associations contribute both to school building, equipment, and upkeep. There have been innumerable instances where the schools were built entirely by the parents. Many nursery-infant schools are financed entirely either by the factory whose workers they serve or by the housing association of the block of flats which they serve.

The Regional and District Education Authorities are responsible for pedagogical technicums and institutes. Factory apprentice schools and Factory Education Combinats, which include schools, institutes, various courses for training skilled workers and specialists, are administered and financed by the factory trusts. The academic work in these is controlled by an Education Commission linked up with a Commissariat of Education. In the same way the Agricultural Education Combinats which train skilled workers and specialists for State and collective farms are administered by these farms. There are special technicums for

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training transport workers. These are administered and financed by the Transport Trust. In fact, industry is responsible for practically the whole of technical education.

The organisation of the school system is very simple, because there is one-class education. When there are enough nursery-infant schools every child will attend these. From here all children automatically pass to the preparatory class, which is sometimes to be found attached to the primary school and sometimes to the nursery-infant school. On completion of this they again automatically pass into the primary school. At twelve years they go to the incomplete secondary school until fifteen. In these schools specialisation begins at fifteen. In the districts where there are ten-year schools the pupils go on until eighteen unless they choose to go to a technicum or factory apprentice school, or give evidence of inability to profit by further academic education. Those who do not go to the complete secondary school (fifteen to eighteen years) either go to the factory apprentice school, on conclusion of which they enter the factory, or go to the technicum for specialised training. When there are sufficient ten-year schools, compulsory education will be from eight to eighteen years. Those who finish the secondary schools generally go on to universities or higher education or higher technical institutes, each of which has correspondence courses. It is also possible to reach higher education and higher technical institutes from the technicums after three years' work. Parallel with these are academies for training directors and managers for national economy, with a two- to three-year course; institutes for training teachers for the seven-year school, a two-year course; higher education institutes for students who are carrying on their work, three-and-a-half to four-and-a-half-year course. All these can be entered after completion of the technicum following a period of work.

The organisation of adult education is simpler still. It begins with the school for illiterates, goes on to the school for the semi-literate. This is followed by a high school with a two-year course. From here the student can go to the workers' technicum,

while still carrying on his work, for three to four years. If he completes this course successfully, he can enter the higher education continuation institute. The workers' faculty<sup>1</sup> accepts workers who have received an incomplete secondary education. From here they can go either to the university, institutes, continuation institutes or Communist universities. Crowning all the institutes and universities is the Academy of Sciences (for research work). Candidates for this are elected by the academicians from intellectual workers who have done outstanding scientific work.

<sup>1</sup> Workers' faculties, or rabfacs, are temporary institutions. They are courses of study for factory workers previously deprived of education who wish to enter higher educational institutions.

## CHAPTER V

### *Polytechnisation*

"Education means to us these things: (1) intellectual development; (2) physical development; (3) polytechnical education; which will give knowledge relative to the general scientific principles of all production processes, and will at the same time give children and youths practice in the use of elementary tools of all branches of production."—MARX.

POLYTECHNISATION is not technical training. It is necessary to emphasise this very strongly in order to dispel the wrong impression which is abroad. Technical training does not begin until fifteen or sixteen years. Polytechnisation is both a system and a method. As a system it acts as the correlating agent between education and life. As a method it prepares the children to be skilful and understanding workers of the community. Let us not be misled by the word worker. In the U.S.S.R. they are striving to give the term a different connotation from that to which we are accustomed. The worker of the future is to be a many sided, fully developed individual. He is to be as interested in matters intellectual and artistic as was the old intelligentsia. In fact he is to be the new intelligentsia. This necessitates on the part of the worker much more than the possession of mere craft or skill. Clever hands in themselves are no longer sufficient. There is to be understanding of the materials used, and of the significance of the product in the economic scheme of the country. Marxists hold that economic forces shape life, that methods of production vitally affect the conditions of humanity. Therefore the individual must not only be a good producer for the new society, he must understand the scientific basis of production. He must understand the relation between man and nature and their interaction. He must know the effect of new productive processes on the organisation of the factory and the organisation of the workers. Theory and practice must be linked together so that the worker regards his work intelligently ; so that he knows its meaning and importance in the scheme of society. All this is

meant by polytechnisation. This connection of education with labour does not have the effect of circumscribing education within narrow limits. The more production is mechanised the wider is the knowledge required by the intelligent worker. For example, the introduction of electric processes in industry has greatly extended the scientific field with which the worker must be acquainted. The mechanisation of agriculture has immensely widened the educational horizon of the peasant boy or girl.

Polytechnisation was adopted by the U.S.S.R. from abroad. The French Utopian Fourier first gave expression to the belief that education in a workers' State must be intimately bound up with labour, and that all should have some experience of manual labour. The idea commended itself to Robert Owen, who tried to put it into practice in England. It was from Owen that Karl Marx adopted it. Both Marx and Engels seized on the idea and made it a corner-stone of Socialist education. Engels, in his *Anti-Dühring*, underlined the fact that polytechnisation was intimately bound up with the construction of Socialism. He considered that the contrast between town and country would only be eliminated when a generation should have grown up with an all-round development, with a polytechnised training. As early as the 'nineties the Russian revolutionaries seriously considered polytechnisation as a Socialist method of education, because at that time the industrial development of the country was creating the conditions for a workers' movement. Lenin stated categorically that Marxists stood for a polytechnised education, for a close connection between education and productive labour. He then linked the question up with universal education and compulsory work for all. Only the close connection of education with productive labour would give all-round developed people.

The question remained a theoretical one until the outbreak of the Great War. Very soon after, Lenin once more began to write on the need for discussion of polytechnisation. After the October Revolution the question became practical politics. The



Communist Party programme accepted at the Eighth Party Conference said that the Soviet school must be polytechnised. At the end of the civil war in 1920–21, when the problem of economic reconstruction was receiving attention, it was realised how much was required in the sphere of technical training to prepare the nation for industry. At once polytechnisation became a burning question. At the Party Conference in 1920 Lenin insisted that the fundamental problem for discussion was polytechnisation. Krupskaya, Lenin's widow, relates how he was dissatisfied with her speech at the conference. She had not laid sufficient emphasis on polytechnisation. He insisted on the necessity for the realisation that the question of polytechnisation was not merely educational; it was a general political question. It was a question of the radical reconstruction of the whole tenor of life, a question of the eradication of the old division of labour, intellectual and manual. This was why he considered it of the utmost importance to start polytechnisation immediately in spite of the disintegration of the economic and industrial system. Lenin always insisted on the interdependence of economics, politics, and culture, on the influence of one over another. To raise the cultural level it was essential to have a polytechnised school, so that it might help in the achievement of a planned Socialist economy. It was important to give the masses a wide polytechnical outlook. He also added that the basic elements of agriculture must be included in polytechnisation. In his letters to Krjijanovsky, Lenin insisted that the masses must be interested in the electrification plans. Later, writing on the work of Narkompros,<sup>1</sup> he discussed polytechnisation, and insisted that it must not be replaced by technical education, by the learning of one trade.

Urging polytechnisation in those early days was obviously a counsel of perfection. There were hardly any teachers or educationists who knew anything about the subject. A workroom in a school was taken to mean polytechnisation. The really polytechnised schools were individual experiments. There were two

<sup>1</sup> Commissariat of Education.

types of schools which did in a great measure approach Lenin's idea of polytechnisation—the factory apprentice school, and the peasant youth school. These had to train skilled workers out of illiterate adolescents. Their very nature made the connection with industry and agriculture the only way. Most of the credit for the establishment of factory apprentice schools is due to the Young Communist League, which almost since its inception fought stubbornly for polytechnisation. Gradually, as economic conditions improved and teachers were trained in Soviet training colleges, it became possible to turn the school into a polytechnised school. In 1930 there was held a conference on "The Reconstruction of the National Economy and Polytechnised Education," which was opened by Krupskaya. She stated that the problem was to turn the mass school into a polytechnised school in practice, not only in theory. Life and industry both demanded this. "We must carry through a great reconstruction of our schools."

Addressing the conference on the second day Krupskaya insisted that their aim was not to give mechanical skill. "The aim of polytechnisation was the all-round education of a highly developed worker, who could at the same time be worker and the master of industry." The narrow specialist was no use to them. "What was wanted was to equip the great masses with elementary industrial culture, and to arm them with a wide polytechnised outlook, and the ability to apply their knowledge and skill to the most varied conditions. Hitherto the qualified worker was a man who, through years of practice, became a skilled craftsman with very narrow limitations. Frequently he had no other knowledge besides that of his craft. He could not do the simplest sum. For example, take the old builder. Often he cannot do the simplest calculations. He has not the most elementary knowledge of geometry so necessary to his work. We need a totally different training—one that can link up productive labour with scientific knowledge." In her concluding speech Krupskaya urged that polytechnisation should be discussed at every adult education centre so that "every woman should

know what the polytechnisation of the school means, and what every working woman and peasant can do to help this on." There was one serious danger of which she warned her hearers—that of mistaking narrow technical training for polytechnisation.

I have given this short historical survey of polytechnisation in order that the reader may see it in its proper perspective, as an educational system closely linked up with productive labour in its very widest sense. It emphasises the interdependence of education, economics, and politics. Communism will only be possible when there is a very high degree of cultural and industrial achievement. For this it is not only necessary to have highly skilled technicians. It is necessary to have workers who understand the underlying principles of modern production, its organisation and distribution; workers who know the science of their materials and tools. It is the business of education to produce such workers. The better all-round developed workers education produces, the more leisure will they have for pleasurable pursuits. The time spent in school on polytechnisation is by no means out of proportion to other subjects, as will be seen later, so that general education does not suffer.

In 1981, as a result of much agitation by the Young Communist League, a final reorganisation was made in the schools with regard to polytechnisation. A decree was issued that every school must be attached to a productive unit of some sort—a factory, or a State or collective farm. This had unexpected results in some places. A certain village in Tadjikistan had duly received the decree. Now there was neither factory nor farm near enough to this village; yet the decree must be carried out. Someone on the education committee remembered that there was a barber's shop. The village school was accordingly attached to the barber's shop as the nearest productive unit.

The decree applies to the nursery-infant school as well as to the secondary schools. The connection between the school and the factory or farm is very real indeed. The factory supplies the school with material, scrap or other, and tools for the workshop.

Usually it equips the workshop, and sometimes it provides the instructor. In one school in Kharkov the factory to which it was attached had detailed a highly qualified engineer, who was also an educationist, to supervise the polytechnical work, to see that it was carried on as education and not as training for a trade. He spent several hours daily at the school. The workshops in this school were extraordinarily well equipped. There was a carpenter's shop, which was to be still further improved by an electric saw, a locksmith's shop, an engineer's shop, with very good lathes, and an electric forge. All this was for children between the ages of twelve and fifteen, who would not necessarily go into a workshop when they had finished this school. The workshop and its equipment depend on the prosperity of the factory to which the school is attached. In a Tatar school in Moscow, which I visited in 1932, the workshop was very poorly equipped because the factory to which it was attached was on low-grade production. The Director and the school council were then making a drive for improvement, and I have no doubt that they have been successful.

The factory elects its representative to sit on the school council. Very often when visitors are expected in the school, he will be there to add his welcome. Where the need exists, the factory will supply clothes for the schoolchildren. It may contribute to school meals, and it will help to send the poorer ones to summer camps. Factory workers can, and do, visit the school, whenever they wish. On the school's side, excursions are organised to the factory to study the workers' conditions, the organisation of industrial planning, and the actual industrial processes. The children will sometimes visit the factory in its lunch-hour, and produce a "Living Newspaper" of recent events. The older children will help generally with the cultural life of the factory. The school is always conscious that it is united with the factory and the factory with the school.

The scope and meaning of polytechnisation may best be given in the words of a textbook, published by Narkompros in 1932. The actual amount of knowledge for each year has been

decreased considerably, and there have been other slight modifications. The general outline remains the same.

“ The minimum of knowledge includes information on the Socialist organisation of the chief branches of industry, national economy, individual undertakings, shops, industrial aggregates, and benches. In all matters dealing with the organisation of industry there must be the explanation of the very fundamental principle difference between Socialist and capitalist production, and the meaning of the Socialist organisation of economy in the development of the productive forces of the country. A well-defined outline of knowledge of the organisation of industry must include information on the following subjects:

“ (1) The management of industry, a knowledge of the work of industrial and professional organisations, and the leading rôle of the Party organisation on the enterprise.

“ (2) Planning of Socialist production as a whole, and for separate branches of industry, and for individual undertakings.

“ (8) The accounts and control of production.

“ (4) Socialist organisation of labour (Socialist competition, shock brigades), the realisation of Stalin's historical Six Points about work and the new economic conditions.

“ (5) Socialist rationalisation of industry; mechanisation, automatisisation, mass production, etc.

“ (6) The technique of safety and welfare.

“ (7) The place of each branch of production in the national economy, and its connection with other branches of industry and agricultural economy.

“ These problems are to be studied as part of the ordinary course of social science and other subjects. This general information on the scientific principles of the organisation of industry must be correlated with practical experience of

industry. For example, a knowledge of benches, shops, engines, etc., must be given practically.

“The theoretical knowledge of the organisation of production must have its complement in practical skill, the ability to work within a Socialist framework, the ability to plan, to prepare statistics, to control the simplest industrial processes, and their own labour. This practical knowledge is to be acquired by the children in the process of the correct organisation of their work in the school workshops, and in the process of actual work. Energetics is to play an important part in polytechnisation. The widespread study of electricity is closely connected with the political aims. Lenin said: ‘Communism is Soviet power plus electrification of the whole country, for without electrification production cannot be increased.’”

This at once explains the particular attention that is paid to electricity in all schools. He goes on to say:

“Here it is not sufficient to understand what this thing electricity is; we must know how to unite it technically with industry, with agriculture, and with the different branches of industry and agriculture. We have to learn this ourselves, and we have to teach it to the whole rising generation.”

According to the polytechnisation handbook, electricity includes:

- “(1) A basic understanding of electricity.
  - “(2) The use of electricity in the mechanics industry.
  - “(3) The use of electricity in the chemical industry.
  - “(4) The electrification plan for the U.S.S.R.
  - “(5) Not less than three visits in the year to electricity stations, factory, or State farm.
- “We must reach the goal now when every electricity station built by us becomes a real base of education and

occupies itself with the education of the masses in electricity. Energetics is to explain the laws of the technical reception of energy and its application to industrial processes. Every industrial process studied, in the outline of polytechnical knowledge, must be studied also from the point of view of energetics: what energy is used for driving the machines; the form of transmission from motor to machines; the quantity of energy used in transmission and in work, etc., etc.

“First place must be given to the creative and practical study of electric energy, production and transmission. The minimum of knowledge must include material acquainting the children with the significance of electricity in mechanisation, automatisisation of production, mass production, and the introduction of continuous production. Heat, mechanics, and other aspects of energy must find a place in the general minimum. The correct understanding of the technique of production will only be achieved when the study of technology is connected with the study of Socialist organisation and production in the closest possible way. Without a knowledge of the fundamentals of organisation and rationalisation of industry, there cannot be obtained the right understanding and knowledge of the technology of large-scale industry.”

I can imagine English readers standing aghast at this programme, or else treating the whole as an impossible joke. Let me hasten to assure them it is neither as terrifying nor as absurd as would appear at first sight. The outline of polytechnical knowledge is not taken until the fifth year, at the age of twelve, and then only in an elementary form. By that time the children have become accustomed to the industrial and economic terminology, just as our children become accustomed to sport or film terminology. I can testify that to a Soviet boy or girl of twelve years old such terms as “Socialist organisation, mechanisation, automatisisation, electrification of industry,” are quite intelligible without having given him either swelled head or brain fever. Naturally the information is given simply, in an elementary

form. They are not expected to be experts when they leave school. They are expected to have, however, and as far as my experience goes they do have, an intelligent grasp of the economic system and the organisation of production in their country by the time they leave at sixteen or eighteen years old. They will all be able to use a great variety of tools, and have an acquaintance with a number of different machines and motors, and should be much more adaptable than the previous generations.

In the nursery-infants' school polytechnisation is in its simplest form. Usually a part of a room has several carpenters' benches made to fit six-year-olds. There are cupboards with tools, such as hammers, planes, chisels, saws. I was informed everywhere that the children did not hurt themselves in the use of these tools. It had apparently not struck anyone that it might be dangerous for the children. In one nursery-infant school that I visited in 1932 the children had made an excellent motor-car and sewing-machine from scrap material supplied by the factory. Most of the work here was collective. The children work with wood, clay, plasticine, paper. In 1934 I was interested to see that simple cooking came under polytechnisation. The six- and seven-year-olds learn to make pastry, soup, etc. The giving out of material, the collection of work, the care of tools is in the hands of monitors elected by the children. Preparation of tools and material and a talk on both precede the actual work, so that pastry-making, for example, would take two lessons. The social significance of the work is always brought out, and it is always linked up with the economic and political life outside the school, even for the very young children. In this respect it differs considerably from the handwork in English infants' schools. It differs in another respect: the models are all big, particularly those made in wood, and the tools used would hardly be allowed to English children of the same age. Weaving with ribbon, paper, thread, stencilling, stitchery, are all included in polytechnised labour. The children are encouraged to work in twos or more, and when an article is finished it bears the names of all the



collaborators. Individual work is not disallowed to the child who prefers it. In plasticine it is generally individual work, though the pieces may often be combined into a project such as a collective farm, or factory. Generally the children themselves will decide on the project, and they will settle among themselves what each is to do. In case of difficulty in making decisions the teacher is asked for help. From personal experience I can say that the children are very thrilled by a project of this sort, though it is not always completed without the manifestations normal to children of that age when they work collectively.

In the primary school, eight to twelve years, the practical work is carried on in a workroom, or in the classroom where this is absent. Here the materials used are cardboard, paper, tin, wire, wood, textiles, and clay. In 1984, needlework was introduced for boys and girls alike. It includes mending, darning, simple cutting-out, and the use of the sewing-machine, as well as the making of simple articles. Work with textiles will include a visit to a textile factory, and a knowledge of the construction of the sewing-machine. Under this head is included also the making of puppets. Wooden articles, such as racks, boxes, etc., are made from prepared wood, often in the workshop. All articles made must be such as can be used either in the home or school. The time spent on polytechnised labour is two hours in a six-day week for Classes 1 and 2, and three hours a week for Classes 3 and 4, out of a school week of twenty hours for town schools. For rural schools it is three hours in a seven-day week out of twenty-four hours for Classes 1, 2, and 3 and four hours out of thirty hours for Class 4.

In the incomplete secondary and secondary schools, twelve to fifteen or eighteen, the practical work is done in a workshop. Some of these, as I have already mentioned, are excellently equipped, while others are, for the time being, far from satisfactory. The time spent on polytechnised labour is four hours in Classes 5 and 6, and five hours in Classes 7 and 8, out of thirty hours in the urban schools, and four hours in Class 5, five hours

in Class 6, and six hours in Classes 7 and 8, out of thirty-six hours in rural schools. Excursions form an integral part of polytechnisation. Four, five, or six have to be made in a term to factories or enterprises connected with the children's work. From fifteen years old the pupils will have occasional practical work at the factory bench.

It must not be imagined that all children on leaving school enter a factory. Very many of them will enter the professions or art. These will go to a technicum, or institute, according to the age of leaving school. But all the children will have worked together at the bench, as will both sexes. They will all have learnt something of economics, industry, and production generally. They will have learnt the interdependence of all types of work and workers. This it is hoped will prevent the gulf that has hitherto existed between manual and intellectual workers.

Again, the children do not necessarily enter the industry of the factory to which the school is attached. In a Moscow school attached to the *Izvestiya* printing works, only 40 per cent of the children leaving entered the works, I was informed, in 1982.

There were many problems confronting educationists in the sphere of polytechnisation: teachers, tools, equipment, material, etc. Research work was begun almost as soon as polytechnisation became a practical measure. In 1981 the Institute of Polytechnisation was organised in Moscow. The Director Nechayev is infectiously enthusiastic, and, like so many other directors of educational institutions that I frequented, very able. The youthful Professor Gaisinovich is at the head of the Department of Methods and Studies. The purpose of the Institute, as Nechayev told me in 1982, is "to find out how to train children as Communist citizens who will not only be skilled workers—that is not enough for a Soviet citizen—but who will have a knowledge and understanding of the foundations of science, and the scientific basis of industry. Only with the help of such workers will it be possible to realise the aim 'to catch up and outstrip the foremost capitalist country in the world.'"

The problem of teachers is a very serious one. The instructor

from the factory knows his job and can show the children how to make an article. But of the educational approach to the work he knows nothing. Nor is he able easily to link up the work in the workshop with the theory in the classroom. On the other hand, the teacher who has merely received a short course of technical training is not a skilled worker, so that the children will not learn the best type of work from him. The perfect teacher for polytechnisation should be a combination of educationist, economist, and engineer. Professor Gaisinovich, writing on the subject, says: "In order to fulfil his plan in strict accord with the matter and directions contained in the State programme, the teacher-instructor must place before himself the following: (a) all aspects of the lesson necessary to complete the programme; (b) methods and preparation for the manual lesson, and their application; (c) the course of each lesson, and its intimate connection with other lessons; (d) the type of preparatory work to be done by the teacher." There are four types of lessons which are included in polytechnical work: (a) practical technology, when the children study and experiment with the material; (b) theoretical technology; (c) manual work which is a combination of (a) and (b); and (d) the excursion. "Excursions play a very important part in polytechnical labour, and detailed preparatory work is required from the teacher. An excursion must never exceed three hours. The polytechnical labour syllabus must be so planned that the children shall realise that their problems and interests are part of the larger problems and interests of the worker class, of the whole Socialist construction." The work in the school workshop is continually to be referred to the factory and farm. Polytechnisation must also be linked up with regional study in its economic, industrial, and social aspects. By the time the children leave school they should have a clear picture of the whole life of their region; they should know its problems and difficulties, and be prepared to aid in their solution.

One of the departments in the Institute of Polytechnisation is concerned with the training of teachers, lecturers, and scientific

workers in the field of polytechnisation. Post-graduates are being trained both for work in the Institute, and for work in pedagogical institutes. There are numbers of courses organised for teachers. They may be short term, three months, or evening courses for those who are carrying on their work. There are discussion groups and refresher courses. Often a group of teachers will come to the Institute for one day. By these various methods, 21,625 educational workers were helped in the last year. In January 1981, an All-Russian Conference of teachers was organised for the discussion of industrial art education in secondary schools connected with railway transport. There are frequent regional or district conferences dealing with a general problem, or specific subjects such as the teaching of biology, chemistry or physics.

The Institute of Polytechnisation is carrying out research and experiment in the suitability of different materials for different purposes and ages, as well as in tools and apparatus. Much of the equipment originally supplied to the school by the factories, was found to be unsuitable. I was shown tools which wasted about 60 per cent of the children's energy. I was also shown the improved tools: hammers for different ages; a plane which worked diagonally instead of at right angles to the body; a platform, which was convertible for four different purposes, on which children could stand at the machine, and so on. The Institute has its own workshops, where specimens of every piece of apparatus and equipment designed by its research workers are made, where whatever is necessary for research work is prepared. Every piece produced is subjected to a number of tests. When it has passed these satisfactorily, it is handed over to the factory for general production. The manufacture of school apparatus of any kind is not a commercial undertaking: it is all under the control of educational institutions.

Considerable work is being done in the invention of apparatus for the teaching of all the sciences, including mathematics. The cost of foreign apparatus made importation on any large scale impossible. The Polytechnisation Institute was therefore

compelled by circumstances to experiment with the material at hand, bearing in mind the present poverty of the country and the lack of scientific skill. The apparatus had to be simple enough, and cheap enough, to be within reach of the village school in remote places, and to be made by the children in the workshops. It has succeeded beyond expectation. There are no commercial interests involved, or profits to be made. The result has been that it has produced apparatus as good as, and in many cases superior to, that imported from abroad, at a cost of one-quarter, one-tenth, or one-twentieth of the foreign article. Much of it is actually made, from any material at hand, by the elder children in the school workshop in the polytechnised labour lesson. There is now a permanent exhibition of polytechnisation, where are shown all kinds of equipment and apparatus for labour and the sciences, specimen syllabuses, plans of lessons, and where help is given to the visiting teacher or educationist with the solution of their problems.

The Institute also experiments with factory equipment, such as watt-meters, galvanometers, etc. In every case I was told they had improved upon the foreign article in effectiveness and cost.

The methods sector is working on the problem of methods and syllabuses, how to relate one subject to another, as mathematics to physics, how to relate the subjects in the classroom to the work in the workshop. Research work is also being carried out on separate parts of the syllabus, on different forms of labour, and on the care and handling of tools in nursery-infant schools. The Institute has one school in Moscow and one in the country where it is carrying on its experimental and research work with the children. Besides this, it has agreements with a number of teachers by which the latter undertake to carry out observations for the Institute. In return they receive material and help. The general syllabus for polytechnisation is planned by the Institute. After approval by Narkompros it becomes compulsory for all schools. The syllabus for rural schools varies slightly from that of the urban schools. As drawn up by the Institute the syllabus allows much scope for adaptation.

Four scientific expeditions were organised to different parts of the country for the collection, sifting, and analysing of material on the polytechnical work in the schools. The results of all this activity are made available to all educational workers through the Institute's publications, which are cheap enough to be within reach of every teacher.

## CHAPTER VI

### *Creative Self-Expression*

THE emphasis on industrialisation is apt to give visitors a wrong impression of the educational aim. The very name of some of the schools—Factory Seven-Year or Factory Ten-Year School—conjures up a picture of the school as training-ground for the factory. What a dreadful system it must be that concentrates wholly on industry ! I have heard much discussion to this effect, and much sympathy expended on the poor Soviet child—until a little more knowledge brought enlightenment. This emphasis on industry, which is perfectly natural in the circumstances of the U.S.S.R., is the cause of much misconception, until it is remembered that the aim of industrialisation is not only to provide the whole nation with food, clothing, and shelter, but with leisure for cultural pursuits. Right through education runs the refrain of the development of the whole human being. That means development, emotional, artistic, social—in a word, cultural as well as technical. In the early days of the Revolution there was little opportunity for the whole nation's children to develop self-expression. When men are starving, when they are fighting for their lives, all thought is concentrated on the material things—food, transport, clothing, etc. The State must feel some security before it can turn its attention to the graces of life. In spite of adverse conditions, there were many individuals who, as early as 1918, were concerned with the arts for the children. Lunacharsky, the first Commissar for Education, was the chief of these. Natalie Satz, then only fourteen and a half years old, began to agitate for a children's theatre. In 1921 she had one started in Moscow. In 1922, Professor Bryantsev founded the Leningrad Children's Theatre. But these were exceptional individuals. Generally there was in those days a very serious inadequacy of teachers and workers in the sphere of the arts. There was equally a shortage of materials—paper, colours, either in

paint or in pencil, crayon, or chalk—of cloth of any kind, and of musical instruments. Inevitably, because of the country's urgent needs, this aspect of education had to take second place. The difficulties were aggravated by the scale on which it was intended to extend the arts and opportunities for self-expression. They were to be within the reach of the millions of children, not merely of the few whom the circumstances of birth had placed in a fortunate position.

To-day the country has made great industrial strides. It feels comparatively secure. How much is being done for the cultural life of the children? Just as in our schools, the curriculum for older children does not allow much time for the arts. Then, said the Soviet educationists, it must be supplemented out of school. This is being done with a fervour, an enthusiasm, and on a scale, that must be unique in the world. There is a passionate belief that every child in the Union must be provided with beauty, with the opportunities for creative self-expression through every known form of activity. One thinks very wistfully of the little attempts in one's own country.

The new type of crèche is the child's first experience of beauty in form and colour. The nursery-infant school gives up most of its time to self-expression. Reading, writing, and numbers are not taken until six years old. For these children, therefore, out-of-school opportunities are not needed, though they are provided in many workers' clubs. It is for the children of school age that most of the facilities are being provided, that independent expression through the arts or the sciences is given extra opportunity. Every school of any size has attached to it a supervisor for out-of-school activities. He or she has been trained by the Central House for the Arts Education of Children. This training includes psychology and teaching methods. This is a full-time post, and the supervisor is regarded as an ordinary member of the staff. Every school also has one or two Komsomol (Young Communist) leaders. When there are two, it is a youth and a girl. They are workers in the factory or other enterprise to which the school is attached, and receive time off for their work in the



school. They work with the school head and staff, through frequent consultations. They help to direct the work of the innumerable school circles which the children are encouraged to form. The activities are carried on in the school premises after school hours, when the cultural supervisor is in charge. She will be aided by qualified specialists and untrained workers, according to the circumstances of the school or the local education authority. A list of circles will show how widely Soviet authorities understand the word culture. There is the literary circle which produces the wall-newspaper, writes poetry and prose, and is called in for help with all celebrations and anniversaries. The painting and drawing circle is very popular. This, too, is called upon on the occasions of celebrations and anniversaries. Its members will help to decorate the classroom, the school hall, and the home. The trained art teacher who may conduct this circle works with the Central House of Arts Education for Children. She has been supplied with a skeleton syllabus for the graphic and plastic arts, and with hints on teaching out of school. Music, both vocal and instrumental, makes a wide appeal. Like the others, the music circle will do much to enliven celebrations as well as summer camps. There is always a choir, and nearly always an orchestra of some kind. It may be composed entirely of national stringed instruments such as the balalaika, or it may be mixed. The drama claims many devotees, and the dramatic circle not only produces plays, but studies the plays that its members are going to see in the theatre. There are dancing circles for folk, rhythmic and plastic dancing. Both this and the dramatic circle help in all celebrations. The work of all these circles is linked up. Thus the literary circle may write a play to be acted by the dramatic circle. The costumes and scenery will be designed by the art circle, and the dresses made by the sewing circle, which is of recent growth. The engineers' circle will be responsible for the stage lighting.

There are other circles which offer opportunities to the more intellectual or mechanically minded children. There is, of course, a reading circle, where not only is reading encouraged, but the

care and handling of books is taught. A naturalists' circle satisfies the cravings of the nature-loving or nature-curious child. One will often find among older children a young biologists' circle. This, like the chemistry circle, will be fortunate in having a laboratory at its disposal. Then there may also be a constructors' circle, for children with the urge to make something. An exploration circle is to be found in many schools. Here children are encouraged, particularly in their holidays, to go out surveying and exploring. There may be other circles besides those I have mentioned, but it is a good enough list to satisfy the child population. All tuition and materials are free. So much for the school.

There are other organisations, only indirectly connected with the school, that cater for the child's leisure. Every self-respecting workers' club has a children's section for those of their members who come to avail themselves of the club's facilities. Mother and father must come to enjoy or improve themselves, but the children must not suffer in the process. The cultural fund of the factory allocates certain sums for this work. It pays for a supervisor, instructors, and material. The club supplies the premises. I visited many such children's sections, but the one that stands out above all others is in a workers' club in Leningrad. We had arrived there without any appointment, and learnt that the dancing class was in the midst of a rehearsal for a demonstration. Entreaties prolonged the rehearsal. It was one of the most delightful half-hours spent in the U.S.S.R. The children were all under nine. They danced with a grace, a spontaneity, a verve, and a freshness that one expects, but rarely finds, in accomplished dancers. The costumes had been made by the children in the handwork circle. Instead of the elaborate rich embroidery which is found on many national costumes, and impossible for such small children to work, they had stencilled the designs on the blouses and dresses, with the happiest results. The dances were traditional dances of the different nationalities. That evening will live long in my memory. The instructor was a young man in the early twenties, who accompanied as well as instructed.

He was a very fine musician, and his playing must have had no small part in the perfection and joy with which the children expressed themselves through dancing.

The children's section provided facilities for plastic and graphic arts, for construction and for music. There were all kinds of toys for the very young. Any special material, such as that for costumes, was provided by the parents.

A very important rôle in the life of the child and adolescent is being played by the ever-increasing number of children's clubs. Let me describe one that I visited on more than one occasion. It is called the Children's House of Culture. The Trekhgornyy District in Moscow is a place of factories, and, when I was there in 1984, was dull, dreary, and altogether unattractive. In this district housing is still a very serious problem, and children abound—a not unusual combination. After school, because there were no other facilities, the children played in the streets, as happens in other countries. But the workers in the Trekhgornyy textile factory decided that it was not good for children to be on the street for several hours. The matter was discussed at the factory committee, and the result was the children's club, for which the factory undertook financial responsibility. There was a church in a central position, practically unused and falling into disrepair. Though not the most suitable premises for a children's club, at a time of building shortage the committee did not intend to be finicky. It is an axiom of Soviet economics that all work should be paid for if it is of any present or future value to the community. The factory committee, therefore, did not waste time trying to find socially minded people of leisure, if such people were to be found at all. They appointed a Director of the club at a salary commensurate with the importance of his work. There are a secretary and a couple of other full-time workers. There are visiting instructors in art, handicrafts, vocal and instrumental music, dance, drama, and science.

The contact with the parent organisation, the factory, is very close. Members of the factory committee help in the innumerable ways in which general help is needed in a children's club. This is

voluntary work, which is the social obligation of every worker, though not by any means carried out by all the workers. The club caters for the children from three schools in the neighbourhood. The cultural supervisor for the out-of-school activities of each school works in close contact with the club. There is considerable interchange of information and frequent discussion between the club and the Heads of the schools and pedagogical sections. Psychological and pedagogical help is also received from Narkompros.<sup>1</sup> The club is thus linked up with the home through its parents' committee, with the factory, and with the Commissariat of Education, and with the political life through the Director as a member of the Communist Party. The members of the Union of Old Bolsheviks come and talk to the children. There is contact with children abroad through Mopr (International Workers' Defence Society). German schoolchildren have visited the club.

The building has been made as attractive as was possible. What was the body of the church is now the hall for assemblies, dancing, and mass activities. Decorated with pictures, posters and slogans, the greatest prominence is given to one of Lenin's dicta, "Without books there is no knowledge; without knowledge there is no Communism." There is little of the obvious political propaganda that would have confronted the visitor two years ago, allowing for the fact that Russia is aiming at Communism.

All the children come voluntarily twice a week for two hours each visit. The graphic arts section has three groups of children, all of whom derive pleasure and satisfaction from this form of self-expression. After a year or two of tuition, the really gifted child will, at the age of fifteen or sixteen, enter an art technicum for further training in art. The art master showed me some of the children's work, which held considerable promise. All of it was gay and lively. Political subjects were decidedly in a minority. Still life seemed very popular. Twelve children have formed themselves into an artists' brigade. They are the enthusiasts. The club is their base. From here they go to draw old Moscow,

<sup>1</sup> The Commissariat of Education.

Socialist Moscow, collective farm life, and so on. In the summer the art instructor goes out to seek the children. Tables and chairs, with materials, including plasticine for modelling, are set out in the park, and there he waits. Soon the curious come along. Many will come only once, but the gifted child will come frequently, and in the winter will join the club. By this method numbers of children who wish to do so can paint, draw, or model, and the talented ones have an opportunity to develop their talent, thus enriching themselves and the community. In the beginning of the autumn a report of the summer holiday is given in the form of an exhibition.

The music section is equally popular. Here, too, talented children are prepared for further serious study. They enter music schools. Those children who show no particular musical talent, but wish to learn for themselves, are given two years' tuition. At the end of that time they are advised to give it up. In the music section parents are encouraged and helped to buy the instruments. Tuition is free everywhere. The younger children are taught the national Russian instruments, which are found to be very helpful later both for the piano and violin. The string orchestra gave a very creditable performance. The wind orchestra was in the experimental stage when I was there. It was found to supply a very useful outlet for some of the energy of the less disciplined children. There is a musical brigade which intends to take up music professionally. The Conservatory of Music in Moscow reserves places for the club's gifted children.

The dancing section was quite recent. The children are extremely fond of dancing. The director sorrowfully told me, "If we do not provide opportunities for other dancing, they will dance jazz, and we do not think jazz is suitable for Europeans." This view, by the way, was expressed to me by many directors of educational institutions, and by the Director of the Prophylactorium (home for prostitutes). (It is now out of date.) The authorities are therefore providing facilities for national, rhythmic, and plastic dancing. In summer they dance in the parks, in the camps, or in the fields of a State or collective farm. A man

with an accordion is hired. He sits in the centre, with the instructress close at hand, and the children dance round in a large circle.

Dramatic work is carried on with children of all ages. For the very young there is a combined dramatic and puppet circle. They find this work with older children more difficult. The problem here is not only to help in self-expression, but to give them knowledge, to make them "dramatically literate," to read and understand plays. This is apparently not so attractive as some other activities.

Story-telling has its own circle. Here the purpose is not only to amuse, but to teach the children the right use and value of words. Revolutionary stories, folk tales, and poetry are given to the children. This work is found to be of considerable help in school literature. Handicrafts include doll-making, clay modelling, and embroidery.

The intellectual tastes of the children are catered for by a library and reading-room. Here specialists in story-telling, actors, and authors will give readings. Political campaigns, anniversaries, writers' jubilees, are made the occasion of talks by well-known people. Children are encouraged to review books, and they discuss writing with the authors. They are also advised here on the best textbooks for their school work, and are helped by a teacher to prepare for the term tests. Biology and astronomy circles appeal to the scientifically minded child, while two rooms are given up to the children with a constructive urge. There is a wireless room, also used by the photographic circle, where children mend, destroy, and make radio sets, which are later inflicted on the home. The engineering room is very large. There is the usual old engine which the children can take to pieces and put together again. Some of the boys had made wooden motor-cars of considerable size, which they propelled by pedals. Others had made very good aeroplanes and engines. This was a very busy room.

Collective mass work is also done with the children. They are taken for excursions to various places—the museum, the

children's theatre, the cinema. Before going anywhere, there is a short talk on what they are about to see. Often a charade illustrating the play or film is arranged.

Boys and girls are given exactly the same facilities, and work or play together. Generally the boys are more interested in technical forms of self-expression than are the girls. In the violin class there are two girls and twelve boys, whereas in the piano class they are nearly all girls. One boy does embroidery. The native string orchestra is mixed in about equal parts, but the wind orchestra has no girls. These were casual observations. Naturally there was no serious work being done as yet on sex differences. The atmosphere of this club was very pleasing in its restfulness. There was a content and quiet enjoyment about the children I encountered. It was the least excited children's institution that I have visited. The ages of the children who visit the club range from eight to eighteen.

*Children's Arts Schools.* There are special children's departments attached to many of the art, music, and drama institutes. In time all institutes will have them. Here come the specially gifted children selected by tests. The demand for places in the music institutes is so great that some parents put their children's names down at four and five years old, I was told at the Kiev Music Institute. They come twelve times in four weeks for a two-hour period—one hour practice and one hour theory. Here they receive first-class tuition and aid in obtaining music and instruments. This children's music school has 500 pupils from the ages of eight to fifteen. Occasionally a very gifted child may be taken at seven years. They accept children who do not play if they pass the rhythmic and aural test. There are three such schools in Kiev, with places for 1,000 children. They learn violin, piano, 'cello, eurhythmics, and *ensemble* work. There is also a young composers' group. The work here is specially connected with music teaching of the masses. The aim is to "train musicians and cultured listeners," the Director informed me. The school gives concerts in the town's theatre and takes part in public festivals.

Good new songs are urgently needed, so song competitions are often organised. "Soviet life has already created its own legends and romance, and the children's songs should deal with these. They should be lively, attractive, and romantic. They should describe all that is best in human character and human endeavour." With the usual Russian friendliness and generosity, the Director arranged a children's concert for me in spite of the fact that normally there were no children at the music school at the hour at which I was free. If my pleasure was any repayment, he was amply repaid. There was a surprising amount of real talent, and two children showed promise of much more than that. The teaching was obviously good. The lack of self-consciousness as well as the responsiveness to the instrument played was very delightful. The opportunities for musical expression which the State is providing will produce a nation of music-lovers and music-makers, and will give any child with genius or talent a chance of developing it. There will be no wasted musical talent because the parents cannot afford the necessary tuition.

Similar opportunities in art are supplied by the schools attached to the art institutes. These are not yet so well established as the music schools, but as the number of art teachers increases, and materials become more abundant, they too will supply all the opportunity needed. The Moscow Regional Art Technicum, which I visited, very recently opened a school for children from eight to fourteen. For 60 places, 680 applications were received. The pupils come twice a week for two hours. The school at present occupies an old, unsuitable building, which had to be adapted. The work suffers in consequence, as also from a lack of materials. The Director hoped that before long these defects would be remedied. I saw a class at work on perspective. The lesson, though not inspiring, was adequate. The art teacher had himself been a peasant lad, and until a few years ago had not even handled a pencil. There was no school in his village when he was a child, only a children's circle run by an enthusiast. Here he had the first experience of using a pencil. At the very first



opportunity he began to study art. He received three years' training in a technicum, and is now teaching, very proud that he can help the workers' children.

I did not visit any schools of drama for children, so can say nothing about them. One very critical note I have to make. This concerns the singing. I heard no good singing by children. The children shouted far too much. This was particularly so in a children's home I visited, and in a Forest School. This is probably due to the lack of good music teachers, but may also be due to the Russians' love of noise.

*The Children's Theatre*<sup>1</sup> deserves a book to itself, so important is it, and so widespread its influence. The idea of a children's theatre in which the actors should be adults, and perform seriously, was first started by a young girl of fourteen and a half, Natalie Satz, in 1918. The early struggles, with lack of accommodation, heating, suitable plays, makes amusing reading in retrospect, but at the time it was almost tragic. A doctor wrote a play for children in which the characters were the intestines and stomach, and the action took place in the mouth. A playwright adapted a tale from the *Arabian Nights* and presented the children with the faithless wife, her lovers, etc.—hardly suitable for children who were to be trained as Communists. Years of perseverance and hard work have brought the Moscow Children's Theatre to a very high level.

In 1922 Professor Bryantsev organised the Children's Theatre in Leningrad. Having overcome similar difficulties, the Leningrad Children's Theatre has reached an equally high level, though in a slightly different way from Natalie Satz's. The children's theatre movement generally is based on Professor Bryantsev's work, and owes much to his enthusiasm, to his wide intellectual outlook, to his fine artistic perception, as well as to the work of Natalie Satz. In the U.S.S.R. it is a serious movement, not a philanthropic venture in which actors have to participate between rehearsal and performance at their own

<sup>1</sup> It serves children from eight to eighteen years.

theatre. It is a part of the educational system, and is under the control of the Commissariat of Education. The players are all professionals, properly qualified, and many already have some years of experience. The aim of the theatre is to help in the training of all-round cultured citizens. There are two tendencies in the movement, one towards a children's theatre, the other towards a theatre for children, as Professor Bryantsev explained to me. The first "is a theatre in which the children are the pivotal point, which works all the time with the children, and where the children themselves live through the creative, emotional experience that has gone into the writing and production of the play. The second is a theatre which produces plays for children as they are produced for adults. In this case the children are only spectators, whereas in the first they are creative participants." Judging from the four towns that I visited, the theatre tries to conform to the first category. The children's theatre can be divided into two necessary parts. One is the section for pedagogy and child psychology, the other the section for plays, including script, production, etc. Professor Bryantsev insists that the first is the foundation without which a children's theatre cannot properly function.

The work of the pedagogical section is threefold. Through the school and the theatre delegates it prepares the children for the play, and generally arouses their interest in the theatre. Through its psychologists it carries on research work in children's reactions to the various stimuli presented by the theatre and to the influence of the theatre over the children's life generally, including the home. In this field it has already collected much valuable material. Finally, the section works with the actors as regards the play, the acting, the producing. The result of this collaboration has been that in the children's theatre the actors are arriving at an understanding of child psychology, and the educationists at an understanding of the needs of the theatre.

The children take an active part by discussing and criticising the play, and they are encouraged to draw and write their impressions. Every class of a school which sends children to the

theatre sends a delegate to the Theatre Delegates' Conference. This discusses every aspect of any play produced. It agitates for greater interest in, and support for, the children's theatre among their schoolfellows, parents, and factory workers. Children come from schools on an average once a month. The price of tickets is nominal, and those who cannot afford that either come free, or are helped by the School Aid Committee. Plays are arranged for age groups. Natalie Satz admits children at the age of six to special plays. The other theatres do not admit them until eight years old. For those under eight they have puppet theatres, which are very joyous affairs, if my experience of them, particularly in the Kharkov Children's Theatre, is a fair sample. All kinds of plays are now produced—Soviet plays, classical plays, selected fairy-tales, and foreign plays. Makaryev, the *régis seur* of the Leningrad Children's Theatre, hopes to produce Shakespeare for the children. Before doing so he intended to study Shakespeare and his epoch for a couple of years, and the Society for Cultural Relations with the U.S.S.R., through its members, has been instrumental in sending him a considerable amount of Shakespearean material for that purpose. It might interest English producers and actors to learn that it takes nearly a year, working fairly continuously, to produce a new play for the children. That will give the measure of the seriousness of this movement. There are now nearly a hundred children's theatres in the U.S.S.R.

Just as there are special theatres for the children, so there are special cinemas. Children under sixteen are not allowed into adult theatres or cinemas, though this is not an unbroken law. There are at present 45 special children's cinemas in the Union, for which the Cinema Trust has to produce special films. There are also 4,000 sets of school cinema apparatus. Even radio stations are separate for children. There are 140 of these. My experience of some of the 2,000 school radio sets does not make me a wireless enthusiast. Most of the instruments that I heard in the schools were very bad, and the children were apparently so used to the noise that came out of them during lunch that they

paid no attention. When a good set is used for good music or drama, it is, of course, a different matter.

For children who desire to express themselves constructively there are children's technical stations. These may occupy an entire building or only one large room. The most complete contain rooms for every kind of constructive ability—engineering of all kinds, wireless, electro-mechanics, aviation, etc., etc. They are staffed by trained instructors who have some understanding of children. To these stations come boys and girls with the problems they cannot solve at home. They will frequently be helped with material as well as technical instruction. Should the child live too far away for a personal visit, he can obtain help by correspondence. Some thousands of letters go out from the Moscow Children's Technical Station yearly.

There are two other institutions for children which I believe are only to be found in the U.S.S.R. They are a Museum of Children's Books and a Children's Books Theatre. The aim of each is to interest children in books, to make them desire, love, and care for books. The Children's Books Theatre was conceived at the State Publishing House in 1929, and until 1932 was under the control of that organisation. It was then taken over by the Commissariat of Education, without being in any way affected. It is a puppet theatre for children under eight years, though older ones do attend. The chief character is Punch—very often the only character. He is a Punch clean, gaily dressed, and without his hump, to be in harmony with the new world that is being wrought around the children. All the work behind the scenes is carried on by one artist. There is a musician who plays the piano, accordion, balalaika and cymbals, and sings as occasion demands. At times he will don character costumes and help with the show. The properties are very simple—a curtain and a very few objects. Everything packs into one box. It is deliberately kept simple, for thus it has the great advantage of easy portability—a very important point when it is realised that this Punch is perhaps the greatest traveller in the U.S.S.R. State farms, collective farms, factories, workers' clubs,

over the whole Union welcome him, and the unsophisticated peasant enjoys his adventures as much as the eight-year-old child. In the first year or two the sketches were woven round books which were shown to the children. Later, plays were specially written. There is one in which Punch sets out to visit the new industrial towns of the Union, as well as agricultural enterprises. He has never read a book, and has no desire to do so; in fact he cannot read. Because of this his journey is full of misadventures. He then decides to learn reading. From books he gains the knowledge he lacked, and his difficulties disappear. I was told that after this performance the children flocked to the libraries and demanded books on the various places visited by Punch. But, however educative the purpose of this theatre may be, the children derive great joy from the performances.

The Children's Book Museum is housed in Moscow in the same building as the Museum of Education. This museum is unique in that the children are told they may touch and handle everything. There are exhibits dealing with the history of books, with literature and its characters, with famous paintings, illustrations, and so on. Each exhibit is arranged in the form of a game of skill, calling forth activity and immediately arousing the children's interest. When they have examined everything and solved all the problems set, the children go into the printing room, where they can print type and illustrations. Here, too, interesting work is being done in lino-cuts, potato-cuts, as well as engraving on metal and glass. Any child who is interested can come here in his or her free time and spend two hours or so practising these arts. There is the usual qualified person supervising.

Naturally all these facilities are not so easily available to villages or small distant towns. The percentage of the child population which has all these advantages is yet small, but it grows yearly. Travelling theatres, cinemas, museums, visit as many centres as possible. At the same time local organisations, whether educational, co-operative, or agricultural, are encouraged to set up permanent cultural centres for the children. As cultural

workers can be trained and as industry produces more, so will every town and village be provided with opportunities, until the time comes when there will not be a child in the whole of the U.S.S.R. to whom any facility for creative self-expression will be denied.

## CHAPTER VII

### *Discipline*

THE question of discipline can only be fully understood if discussed in relation to the economic and political aims of the country and the characteristics of the Russian people. The primitive conditions under which the masses lived before the Revolution produced an unsophisticated people, much nearer to the child than is the Western European. Probably that is why they are more tolerant of so-called childish naughtiness, and much more patient. I have seen a Russian mother (an educationist) spend fifteen minutes persuading her son of fourteen to do a shopping errand. I have seen Russian parents submit to behaviour on the part of children that would not have been tolerated by the most freedom-loving English parent. They remonstrated continually and ineffectually, but they never showed anger or irritation. This may be one of the reasons for Soviet children's great friendliness and frankness to strangers.

Again, most Russians like noise, and a children's room (out of school) that would drive an English person to distraction will in no wise upset the Russian. All this would make the problem of discipline in the school a matter of no serious moment were it not complicated by two other factors. The poverty and oppression, the autocratic attitude of superiors, and the lack of education, which characterised alike the lot of the peasant and the industrial worker, conspired to the production of people unused to self-discipline. It is no easy matter for people who for centuries have been used to the knout and whip, to fines and imprisonments, to adapt themselves to a condition of comparative freedom. The psychological adaptation required for the instinctive reaction to new stimuli is a lengthy process. This, the first factor, results from old conditions. The second factor results from new conditions. It is that a planned society in which the worker is to be master of himself and his country must have

disciplined citizens. The question of discipline, therefore, takes a very prominent place in educational life. In an earlier chapter I described the type of discipline which prevailed in education soon after the Revolution. In some districts the lack of discipline continued even as late as 1932. Pistrak, in his book *School Themes*, gives reports on some of the schools in the town of Rostov in which a remarkable state of affairs existed. "The children in Class 5 run in and out of the class like lunatics. Fighting begins; they run about the classroom. The teacher asks a boy to sit down and be quiet. Books are given out. No one does anything. The lesson is wasted." It was about this time that the Central Committee of the Communist Party issued the decrees dealing with discipline. The onus of maintaining discipline was placed on the teacher. It was pointed out that there was a very close connection between an interesting and well-planned lesson and good discipline. Since 1932 Soviet educationists have travelled swiftly along the road to discipline, and they are in danger of overdoing it. "To be organised" is becoming a fetish. It is the inevitable reaction from the former complete lack of organisation, and the response to the need for disciplined workers. I have no doubt that when the need disappears, the stress on organisation will also disappear.

To quote Pistrak again: "An intelligent discipline includes right behaviour in the small details of daily life outside and inside the school, and is a result of the general conditions." On this subject Lenin, addressing the Third Conference of the Komsomols (Young Communists), said, "In place of the old military discipline which existed in the bourgeois society in spite of the will of the majority, we are going to create an intelligent worker and peasant discipline which will unite with its hatred for that old social order the determination to equip themselves with the knowledge to organise and unite all the forces for that struggle. And from the will of the scattered and broken-up millions, and hundreds of millions, of people disposed over the vast territory, shall be created one will. Without this unified will we shall certainly be destroyed. Without this solidarity, without



this conscious discipline of workers and peasants, our task is hopeless." Continuing, he said, "Before you is the problem of construction, and you can only solve it when you have mastered all modern knowledge, when you know how to turn Communism from ready-made parrot formulas, from advice, recipes, prescriptions, programmes, into that living thing which will unite your immediate work; to make use of Communism as a guide to your practical life." Pistrak takes the text, "To make Communism a living guide for practical work, that is the fundamental way to an intelligent, conscious discipline," for discussion of the whole question of discipline. He says, "The educational problem of the school consists in this: to turn Lenin's directions into living activity, to use them as a guide for practical work. That means that the problem of creating an intelligent conscious discipline can only be approached from the point of view of Communist morals, from the point of view of the struggle for, and the attainment of, Communism. This means that every step in the struggle for discipline must be a step towards Communist upbringing. Herein lies the 'consciousness' in discipline. . . . The fight for a conscious discipline is a fight which is politically significant. Hooliganism, disorderliness, etc., in the school must be regarded as a reflection of the struggle of the class enemy forces which are trying to prevent the establishment of proletarian, Socialist discipline in our life, in our economy, in production, and in work. The sabotage which was organised by the kulaks, particularly in the Kuban district, in the autumn was reflected in the schools. There was a great increase of hooliganism, window-breaking, insubordination, etc. In Kuban villages there was a sharp fall in attendance in the schools. This was one of the most widespread forms of struggle against the Soviet school. . . . The fight for a conscious discipline has a political meaning."

It is obvious from the above that discipline in school has a purpose other than merely the development of the individual. It has a definitely social purpose. The type of discipline will, therefore, be a result of the conditions of the body politic of the

country. Changes in the country's conditions will inevitably have their repercussions on school discipline. We are led to the conclusion that only the principles are stable, that the methods are liable to change with the changing demands of the country.

However much Soviet educationists desire a well-disciplined society, they are firmly opposed to discipline in the school imposed from above. It must be an intelligent discipline that comes from within, which results from the harmonious development of the child in a harmonious environment. If there is indiscipline, the cause must be sought first of all in the child's environment, including the teacher, and then in the child. Corporal punishment is prohibited by law. The cruelty which the peasant met at the hands of his masters engendered cruelty in himself, and in the old days wife-beating and child-beating were prevalent, particularly on saints' days, when he was drunk. The educated Russian regards corporal punishment as a barbarism which no enlightened people can tolerate. One of the questions I was never able to answer to Russians was why a highly civilised country like England uses and justifies corporal punishment. No form of vindictive punishment is allowed. How, then, is discipline maintained?

The smaller classes at once ease the problem. But the most important factor making for discipline is the close connection of the school with the life outside. Since all are striving for the same aim, there is no contradiction between life in the world outside and life in the school. School ceases to be a place into which children are compelled to go by the will of adults. It is no longer something from which the child has to escape. The enthusiasm for Socialist construction, the drive for everything that is best which goes on outside the school, makes itself felt very strongly within the school. Except where the parents are very hostile, the children respond very readily to an appeal on these lines. They genuinely do desire on the whole to become cultured and skilled citizens in order to help Socialist construction. Learning has a purpose which they not only understand, but which also appeals to them. Under such conditions school

arouses no hostility or resentment. A young Russian girl of fourteen who was living in England for a time was genuinely unhappy because she was not having enough work in school, nor enough homework. I have known others refuse to go out on a holiday because they had school work to prepare, although it was not obligatory.

In the comparatively few years since the Revolution there has already grown up a tradition of behaviour among Communist children. This tradition is particularly evident among the Pioneers, who are a strong force for discipline. One hears now the phrase, "This is not done by Communist children." There is arising a Communist code of behaviour in the same way as the public school code in England has arisen. Only there is this difference between the two: the Communist code does not make for exclusiveness, is not a class code. On the contrary, it is all-embracing, applying to all the workers of the world. Public opinion plays as strong a part inside the Soviet school as it does elsewhere among adults. The teachers try to make the children feel that each one of them is responsible for the discipline of the whole class, and they exercise this responsibility. I have seen a boy not interested in a lesson, who tried to make himself a nuisance, very effectively silenced by the other children round him, when the master's admonitions failed.

The wall-newspaper, a sheet as big as a double page of a large newspaper, is found very helpful in maintaining discipline. A committee elected by the children forms the editorial board. On it go reports of class achievements and failures; descriptions of incidents, in prose or poetry, in the life outside the school. At the time of the rescue of the crew of the *Chelyuskin* ice-breaker, most schools had *Chelyuskin* editions, many had *Chelyuskin* corners in the classrooms. An undisciplined child will find himself lampooned in pen or pencil by a future Swift or Low. In a nursery-infant school, on the wall-newspaper of the seven-year group I saw what was intended to be a portrait of Misha, who had not washed behind the ears. Another method of obtaining discipline is that of individual and collective

agreements. A child agrees to fulfil certain obligations, which are written down and signed by himself. At the end of the week he brings the agreement out to his teacher, who will mark each item according to his fulfilment. The friendliness and comradeship that always exist between the Soviet teacher and the children usually bring forth the truth. An agreement of a nine-year-old boy which I saw contained such clauses as: not to be late for school, to listen to his elders, not to fight, to come to school clean, not to talk during lessons (while the teacher is talking). Another child may make a mutual agreement with his father. He will undertake to do his lessons well while the father must do his work well in the factory. At the end of the period the agreement is brought before a committee, which judges of its fulfilment.

Socialist competition is another aid to discipline. One group within the class will challenge another to carry out certain duties or to undertake the achievement of certain tasks. The competition may be between classes or between schools. There have been occasions when all the schools of one district have challenged the schools of another district.

Shock-brigadism is yet another method of obtaining discipline. The children are encouraged to enrol themselves as shock-brigaders. As such they have to achieve 100 per cent fulfilment of work and behaviour. Each pupil has a book, which goes on the classroom wall, in which he puts down his percentage of achievement. All these methods are creative and not repressive, and the results generally are successful. When a child does not respond to these methods, the school psychologist is called in to help. An enquiry into home conditions is followed up if necessary by examination of the child, and the treatment is, accordingly, either improvement in the home conditions, removal to another school, or removal to a special school.

Stronger than all the above measures in a disciplined régime is the children's self-government or self-activity. Though the sphere within which the children may work has been curtailed, there is ample scope for the expression of all the energy and

initiative the repression of which is usually the cause of naughtiness. Children in Soviet schools have responsibilities which are rarely given to children elsewhere. Self-government in school is deliberately used to make the children realise their social obligations, their responsibilities as builders of a Communist State. I will quote from the Regulations on Children's Self-Government as laid down by Narkompros in 1932 for the R.S.F.S.R., in agreement with the Central Committee of the Komsomol. They have been slightly modified by now—class committees have been abolished in Classes 1 and 2—but in essence remain the same. "To arrange the work of self-government organs in the school in such a way that it shall be directed in the first place towards a raising of the quality of study and a strengthening of the conscious discipline in the school" (from a decree of the Central Committee of the Communist Party).

"(1) Children's Self-Government in the polytechnised school must embrace all the children. It draws the children into active participation in the growth of the school. Children's Self-Government fights for a self-restrained Communist upbringing, for increased class vigilance against the attempt of class enemies to influence the children.

"(2) With this aim in view, C.S.G. fights in the school for (a) raising of the level of general knowledge, (b) an extension of the polytechnical outlook and knowledge, (c) acquisition of skill, the planning of studies and manual work, (d) the strengthening of conscious discipline, (e) fulfilling social duties, (f) carrying on in an organised way out-of-school (mass cultural) work, (g) improving the children's health.

"C.S.G. works in the following way:

"(1) Influences all children to read books, organises circles, brigades for the solving of difficulties in study, organises comradesly help for the backward, draws in adults to help backward children, organises among comrades an interchange of books where there is a shortage.

"(2) Draws the children into the children's sections 'for mastering technique,' organises technical readings, visits

children's technical stations, helps the teacher to organise poly-technical excursions, organises technical circles, draws in shock-brigaders, workers, kolkhozniks, and specialists to help in the technical studies, in the making of radio sets, telephones, electrical apparatus, etc.

“(8) C.S.G. helps the circles and brigades to distribute the work so that every child has a job, and is responsible for it, helps children to learn the correct organisation of manual work . . . helps them to attain speed and quality in the work.

“(4) Explains to the children why they have to learn and work. . . . Helps the children to remember the usefulness of collective work and to oppose those who interfere with work. Fights with hooliganism, fights for co-operation in work and help between boys and girls. Organises Socialist competition between groups, circles, and brigades, helps the teacher to see that each pupil gets his homework and gets it done. It watches that the pupils shall take care of school property, that they shall not absent themselves from school or arrive late.

“(5) Strengthens the contacts of the school with the Kom-somol and organisations in the factory, the kolkhoz, the machine tractor station, and helps them to teach the illiterate, to improve production in the enterprise, and to carry on the fight for labour discipline. It strives that all the social work shall be closely connected with studies, according to the school plan, shall be properly organised, and serve the educational aims of the school.

“(6) Organises cultured rest in breaks and on rest days, arranges excursions, walks, games, social evenings, draws the children into literary, political, and artistic circles, organises the work of the school club and children's reading-room, helps the circulation of books, papers, and journals; develops the work of the societies for international, anti-religious, and defence work among children.

“(7) Sees that children are not overloaded with work or social duties at school or at home, fights for cleanliness and hygiene among the pupils in the school and in the house, organises

physical culture circles, walks, and outdoor games and sport; helps sick comrades . . . fights for a healthy life and environment for children in the family.

“The school Head must have direction of Self-Government. She must not use it for the purpose of carrying out her wishes.” In theory, neither the Head nor the staff are concerned with the Pioneer organisations; in practice, the Head or staff, be they Communist or not, must supervise and work with it. Similarly they must help the cell of the Young Communist League. The Komsomol cell directs the Children’s Self-Government through its members on the pupils’ committee and on the school organs. “Just because the Komsomol has to set an example in everything to the rest of the school, the Head and the staff must help it and guide it, must see that it has a good leader.”

*Self-Government in the Class.* “(1) The highest organ of S.G. in the class is the general meeting of pupils. The meeting discusses and decides questions such as the study and social work of all the children in the class. All elected children and committees report on their work to the general meeting.

“(2) S.G. organises the pupils into various brigades and circles, utilising the self-activity and initiative of the children. One brigade is responsible for regular and punctual attendance, finds out how many, and why, children are late or absent, decides on the necessary measures to help them. Other brigades are responsible for cleanliness and order in the classroom, for helping backward children, for polytechnical work, etc., etc. . . . Children form brigades and circles as they please. A brigade should have no more than five children in the older classes and three or four in the younger classes. A circle consists of all children with the same interests. Every brigade appoints a brigadier, and every circle a prefect, to organise and keep a record of the work. The general class meeting elects a Class Committee of five to direct the work of the class. The Class Committee directs the life and activities of the class, brigades, and other societies. The Class Committee appoints its chairman, the

class prefect, the class secretary, and leaders for (a) studies, (b) manual work, (c) mass cultural work.

“(8) The Class Council has as additional members the leader delegated to Self-Government in the class, a representative of the parents, and a cultural worker from the factory workers, peasants, and professional workers who are connected with the school.

“(4) The class prefect arranges for class monitors, and forms the link between the class and its teacher, the School Pupils’ Committee, the Head of the school, and the School Council. He or she organises meetings of the Class Council, general class meetings, records, and puts forward suggestions for the improvement of studies and cultural work in the class.

“(5) The class teacher is responsible to the Head for the Children’s Self-Government in the class, helps the brigades in their work, holds discussions with the children on self-government, notes this or that failure. . . .”

*The General School Meeting and Pupils’ Committee.* “(1) The highest organ of Children’s Self-Government in schools with an attendance of under 800 is the General School Meeting of pupils. In schools with over 800 children the highest organ is the General School Conference. The delegates to the conference are elected in class meetings, one delegate for every five to ten pupils.

“(2) The General School Conference elects from members of the primary and secondary schools a Pupils’ Committee of fifteen members. Pupils should be elected who are good at their work, exemplary children and socially minded, and who take an active part in the school life. The Pupils’ Committee is elected twice a year.

“(8) The Pupils’ Committee apportions its work among its members in the following way: (a) a chairman, (b) a secretary, (c) a leader of study and manual work, (d) a leader of cultural work. The rest of the committee is divided up among the leaders to help with their work.

“(4) In addition to the scholars, the Pupils’ Committee has as  
Gm



members the Head of the school, teachers from the primary and secondary schools, a representative from the factory or farm, and a representative from the Komsomol."

*The Organisation and Work of the General School Meeting and Pupils' Committee.* "(1) The General Meeting or Conference is called by the Pupils' Committee, in agreement with the Head, once in three months for the following business: (a) the election of the Pupils' Committee and the various school sub-committees; (b) discussion and adoption of plans and reports of the Pupils' Committee and its sub-committees, and examination of work done; (c) discussion of questions dealing with, and measures for, the improvement of the standard of work and conscious discipline, work of the circles, brigades, classes, etc., and discussion of reports from the Head and social organisations.

"(2) The decrees of the General Meeting or Conference are approved by the Head and are then binding on all pupils. The Pupils' Committee organises all practical work. Through its sub-committee it directs the Self-Government work in the class and in all pupils' organisations in the school. It receives reports from class prefects, judges experiments, and passes on the best of them from one class to another. . . .

"(3) The Pupils' Committee watches that children are not overburdened with social duties, and arranges social evenings in the holidays. It organises the play-time in school, is in charge of the cleanliness and orderliness of the school, and organises the monitors.

"(4) The Pupils' Committee is the link with the School Council, with the school production meetings, with the factory, collective farm, and State farm organisation to which the school is attached. The committee appoints its permanent representative to the School Council and to the Methods Bureau. The Committee directs the school wall-newspaper, appoints an editor from its members. The editorial board is elected at the School Conference or general meeting. The school editorial board helps the classes with their wall-newspapers.

“(5) The Pupils’ Committee settles problems arising out of bad behaviour. It must change wrong decisions of the C.S.G. organisations, always explaining to the children where they were mistaken.

“(6) The Pupils’ Committee harmonises and unites the work of the Pioneer organisations with the Children’s Self-Government.

“(7) The Head of the school is responsible for the work and condition of the C.S.G. The Komsomol cell and Pioneer Detachment lead in the following manner : The Komsomol appoints a representative to the Pupils’ Committee, receives a report from its representative on the C.S.G. work, and helps the Pupils’ Committee in its fight for quality in work and for a conscious discipline.

“(8) The Pioneer Detachment leads C.S.G. through the Pioneers elected to the Pupils’ Committee. . . . The leader of the Pioneer Base is a member of the Pupils’ Committee.”

*The Relations of C.S.G. with the Administration, Teachers, and Social Life.* “The School Director or Head is responsible to the Education Authority for the condition of work. He should direct the C.S.G. so that it participates in school work, helps in the development of children’s initiative and activities. Teachers must be attached to all self-government organisations for practical help. They are responsible to the administration for the conditions of the work, but they must not destroy the children’s initiative by their authority.”

Reading through the above, it may well be asked, “When do the children work or play ? ” Let us see what this talk of self-government amounts to in practice. The Russians have a way of drawing up schemes and programmes which are not nearly so alarming in practice as in print. This applies equally to the school and to industry. The children under twelve can be, and in fact are, only nominally responsible for much of the school life that is supposed to come within their jurisdiction. A great deal of guidance and suggestion comes from the teacher. The

tasks allotted to them have been greatly diminished in importance, and the demands that may be made on a child have been strictly limited by the 1982 decree, which was signed by the Commissars of Education and Health. They are, however, given much more scope for exercising initiative, co-operation, the sense of responsibility to the community, than in the average school in other countries. They are being trained to use independent judgment. They are trusted with work and situations which correspond with their experience, which is wider than is usual for children. They are no longer placed in situations which are too difficult for them, nor is judgment demanded beyond their experience, as was the case some years ago. Moreover, the teacher is always present to help. In the incomplete secondary and secondary schools the children carry much more serious responsibilities. Equipped by their earlier experience, they discharge these well on the whole. They are becoming self-reliant and disciplined, and capable of wielding authority. In 1984 I was present at a Children's May Day Celebration in a factory club in Moscow. There were about 500 children present in the hall. The proceedings included the election of the presiding committee, reports, speeches—including one by me—and a concert. All the arrangements were excellently managed by the committee of six boys and girls between the ages of fourteen and sixteen and the Komsomol leader of nineteen. It was an astonishing performance.

The fact that the ultimate responsibility for self-government rests with the teacher, and finally with the Head, prevents this work from becoming too onerous or terrifying. I noticed very strongly in 1984 the tendency to limit more and more the calls made on the children, so that they may have their energies for study, and obtain proper rest.

In the home the problem of discipline—or, rather, the problem of the adjustment of the growing child to the adult environment—is as much to the fore as it is in English homes. Conflict between the two interests still occurs. Here much work is being done with the parents. The Commissariat of Education, as well as local

authorities, issues educational literature expressly for parents. There are numerous lectures by psychologists and educationists for the worker and peasant parents, where the attendance shows a great eagerness to learn. It goes without saying that the wireless, the film, and the poster are brought in to help. Much is done through personal correspondence. Professor Arkin, of the Institute for Mental and Physical Hygiene of the Child and Adolescent, receives hundreds of letters from parents, and answers them all. He has collected a number of the most typical, and these, with the replies, have been published in pamphlet form. I was told the pamphlet was sold out soon after publication.

The question of discipline as regarded in the U.S.S.R. resolves itself into this: School discipline cannot be isolated from the rest of the child's life. It is intimately bound up with the social, political, and economic conditions of the country, with the immediate general environment of the child, with its physical condition. There must be full co-operation between all the factors bearing on the child's life, the school, the home, the cultural, and the industrial factors. The closer this state is approached, the less of a problem does discipline become.

## CHAPTER VIII

### *Sex Instruction*

To have a separate chapter on sex instruction will cause astonishment to many Soviet teachers. The visitor is informed everywhere that there is no sex problem in the schools, that co-education creates no problems, and that Soviet children and Soviet youth are not interested in sex. I, too, had been told this so frequently, and by responsible directors of schools, that I had come to believe it. It was while living in a Russian household that I was assailed by doubts as to the simplicity of the problem as regarded by Soviet educationists. The doubts arose from the information gained during a talk on the subject with the friends with whom I was staying. I learnt, as I ought to have realised at once, that the problem of sex in education had not disappeared with the Revolution; that unpleasant incidents did still occur among the children. This set me on to make further enquiries on the subject.

To my astonishment, I found the educated Russians surprisingly conventional on the question of giving sex information to children. I found Communists of long standing whose views on the subject were no more advanced than those of the suburban parents living in capitalist countries. One Communist friend was very concerned as to the information and the manner in which his boy of eleven was picking it up from the other children in the courtyard, and asked my advice. My reply that he was several years too late surprised him. How was it possible to give a small child information? He was almost shocked to learn that many people in England considered it essential for the children of both sexes to see each other and their parents nude. Like many English parents, he shrank from broaching the subject to the boy, nor did he feel capable of using opportunities that arose.

Another Communist friend did not permit his daughter,

now fourteen, to play with the other children in the courtyard. That was his solution to the problem. Generally I found parents of the educated class much more backward in this respect than similar parents in England. The enquiry among parents was followed up by serious enquiry in the schools and among medical workers.

The claim that sex education for the young presents no seriously urgent problem in the U.S.S.R. is not without some justification. The attitude of the children to sex is not uninfluenced by the attitude of the adults, which in its turn is influenced by the economic conditions of the country. The complete economic equality of the sexes, the absence of competition for jobs, has eliminated the sex hostility and antagonism caused by economic pressure. The possibility of early marriage, and the consequent healthy satisfaction of the sex instinct, has removed the chief cause for sex preoccupation, for the exaggerated idea of its importance. Easy divorce is another helpful factor. The complete absence from the Press, from the theatres, and the cinemas which the children attend, of sex exhibitionism, combines with the other factors to create an environment for the child free from that concern with sex which is so characteristic of modern life in other countries. Therefore the sex curiosity of the child is not unhealthily stimulated. The youth with which I came into contact appeared to be singularly free from sex preoccupation, and genuinely so.

It was much more difficult to arrive at the true state of affairs with the younger children, as one was not in a position to discuss the subject with them. I found that opinion was divided on the subject between the educationists and the medical people with whom I discussed the matter. The latter believed that sex education in some form was necessary at some stage, but they were vague about the details. The conditions of overcrowding which still existed in Moscow, for example, they stated, must give rise to an unhealthy state of affairs. The subject should therefore be explained to the children before any harm could be done. On the other hand, the educationists on the whole

insisted that there was no problem that could not be dealt with in the ordinary course of teaching. Epstein, the Vice-Commissar for Education, was very emphatic about this, though he agreed that overcrowding probably gave rise to undesirable incidents, but he considered that it was a temporary evil and did not merit any special attention.

Though the medical men with whom I discussed the matter held that some education at certain stages was desirable, they were in total disagreement with the advanced school on sex education in England. They considered the attitude of those people who argued that certain practices on the part of the adolescent boy were normal, and should not be discouraged, was utterly wrong. And the view that young adolescents should be given the possibilities for satisfying any sex desire that might arise they considered preposterous biologically. First they argued that with the normal boy or girl the sex emotions do not have the physiological urgency to be translated into acts; secondly, that the longer sex activity can be put off—eighteen was the age suggested—the more healthy the human being is likely to be. As medical men with long practice, they put down most cases of neurosis and neurasthenia to a too early as well as a too frequent indulgence in sex. Sex repression did not come their way much. One must remember that, in Russia, early marriages have always been customary. The doctors with whom I discussed the subject were experienced in this sphere. Living next door to Asia, they were able to judge the results of early sex life. One of them was the Director of the Moscow Prophylactorium; another was the Director of the Institute for the Hygiene of Children and Adolescents; and another was a medical psychologist of wide experience. They claimed that the full opportunities for emotional satisfaction, for self-expression, that were provided for the children, the excitements and adventures of life, freed most of them from a concern with sex that was likely to cause maladjustments.

It might interest readers to learn that the Soviet authorities have raised the marriage age in the Asiatic Republics to sixteen,

and they hope through propaganda and education to abolish child marriages.

In the schools I discovered the practice varied with the individual Heads. There was no sex instruction as such in any school, but the facts of human reproduction were not ignored or glossed over. In biology and physiology the teaching did not stop at essential points. Reproduction was taken as a matter of course. In the primary school, nature-study includes the care of animals, and here, too, information was not withheld, so that the intellectual curiosity was satisfied. In most schools that I visited—and I believe this is general—nothing further was done; no special attention was paid to emotional curiosity. If, however, a boy or girl was found to need advice or help, the task was given to the school doctor.

In the Gorki Model School in Moscow, the able and experienced Head, Poltavskaya, finds that the problem cannot be left to solve itself. She holds that sex education should be a continuous process throughout the whole of school life and not be concentrated into periodic lessons or talks. This only serves to accentuate sex unnecessarily. According to her, there are three definite sex periods. The first is the period of curiosity of the very young child, which is satisfied in such lessons as nature-study. The second is at the age of twelve to thirteen, when boys especially begin to be conscious of sex, and when sex may show itself consciously and unconsciously. The third stage is between fifteen and seventeen years, when in boys it expresses itself obviously. At this period she considers it is necessary to speak clearly and scientifically, specifically on sex and its problems. She explains to the boys the necessity for self-control, brings out the social as well as individual importance of it. The boys and girls are addressed separately in groups of seven or eight. To girls is explained the reason for modesty. It is not an old-fashioned, conventional virtue, to be discarded with capitalist economics. On the contrary, it is a valuable social trait, because to arouse the sex instinct in boys is harmful to the individual, and through the individual to society. Above all things, a



Socialist society must be healthy physically and psychologically.

The boys are shy and uncomfortable at first, but they soon realise how suitable she is for the task. Naturally the talk to them is different from that given to the girls. Special physical exercises are given them, and art work and other prophylactic measures are employed. The talk ends with a discussion on the boys' attitude to girls, to their parents, and to the future. They are free to come to her whenever they are in difficulty. She finds that generally this group talk is sufficient. When this is ineffective, she gives an individual talk. She told me that she had never had a case with which she had been unable to deal.

They are very watchful in her school, and take all possible measures for a healthy life. The lavatories are watched, suitable tables and chairs are provided so that a wrong posture does not act as a stimulus, and much work is done with the parents. Masturbation she, like all those with whom I discussed the matter, considers definitely bad, and to be discouraged. One of the measures she employed to deal with it was cold baths. In her experience girls showed less sex than boys. She had had one case of masturbation in a girl of thirteen, and had cured her.

At puberty the boys were very attracted to the girls, but it was an objective attraction. She finds the boys at this period adventurous, showing an affection for animals, and preferring literature dealing with heroism. They are fortunate that Soviet life supplies them with innumerable opportunities for adventure and heroism.

Dr. Konyus, of the Institute of Mother and Child, whose work lies in a very crowded workers' district, used another method to solve the problem. She obtained the consent of the Head of a school in her area for the children of Class 4, eleven years old, to use the institute as the place for their nature study and social science excursions, and for her to take the lessons on human reproduction. She met the children in their class, told them a little about her institute, and asked whether they would like to visit her crèche. The children were delighted to do so, and the very next excursion was to the institute. There was a

new-born baby in the dispensary, and it was used as the subject for the first lesson. Dr. Konyus took the subject from the social point of view. She explained about the birth, what it meant to the mother, why it was essential to have proper care and cleanliness in the home, the right food, etc., why the mother should be helped by the father and the children. She showed pictures of a malformed baby, and explained how cruelty to the mother resulting from drunkenness might cause it.

She explained the importance of the father, and how drink could be harmful.

The new-born baby still showed the navel cord. This gave her further opportunities of social emphasis to the talks. There were seven lessons in the series, and the whole process of reproduction was explained, always from the social point of view, and quite unemotionally. Wherever possible the social implications were brought in. Dr. Konyus believed that the experiment was highly successful, as the children received the scientific information before their emotions were involved.

Except by working continually and for a considerable period in the schools and with the children, it is obviously impossible to tell whether the problem is so little insistent, so easy of solution, as Soviet educationists and medical people claim. It is too early in Soviet life to prove their belief that all sex problems, except pathological cases, are the result of the social and economic system. But this can be said: the atmosphere in the U.S.S.R., whether among children, youths, or adults, with whom one has come into contact—and my contacts were wide and various—is very free from sex consciousness. I found no evidence of that sex obsession which so haunts the intelligentsia of other countries. The youths and girls to be seen in the parks never paraded their sex for each other's excitement. This at least weights the scale in favour of Soviet theories.

## CHAPTER IX

### *Educational Research*

It is safe to say that there is no country in the world in which there is so much educational research being carried on as in the U.S.S.R. Even America, the country *par excellence* of educational research and experiment, has to give place to-day to the Soviet Union. Not all the research appears valuable, or even worth while, to the foreign observer. However he may criticise, he cannot escape being caught up in the enthusiasm of the workers, nor affected by their passionate quest for knowledge and information. In the U.S.S.R. there is probably, at the present stage, less knowledge of the process of teaching, of the ingredients necessary for the perfect lesson, than in many other countries. These countries can only be partially helpful to the Soviet Union. The perfect lesson is a relative term, depending on the educational aims. Since the Soviet educational aims differ so widely from capitalist educational aims, the teaching process itself must in some measure differ too. Again we are brought up against the connection between education and politics. When, therefore, both the Dalton Plan and Project Method were discarded as unsatisfactory, Soviet educationists had perforce to apply themselves to the task of discovering methods which should be adequate to the demands of the cultural and economic life of the country. This they did with a will.

Every pedagogical institute has its corps of post-graduates, part of whose work consists in observation and research. It should be noted that every post-graduate must have completed at least three years' teaching. Many of them will have done considerably longer periods in all parts of the country under very varied conditions. The latter will utilise their experience to help their own and their colleagues' research. The workers will be divided up into brigades of four to six and sent to a school for a certain period. Here they will attempt to observe accurately

and minutely all that takes place during a lesson. Everything will be noted down: the subject-matter of the lesson, the teacher's approach to the lesson, his mannerisms, whether he hinders or helps the lesson, his movements, etc., etc. Another time a brigade may be set to study one phase only—for example, the children's reactions to a given lesson, or the teacher's use of language in a lesson. On one occasion the Boubnov Pedagogical Institute sent six of its research students to study the time wasted in a lesson on unnecessary phrases and gestures. They sat at the back of the class and wrote down every unnecessary word, gesture, and movement. One of them had a stop-watch, and noted the duration of time for everything. The results of these labours were then written up, analysed, and discussed by the group. It was found that about ten minutes had been wasted by the teacher in unnecessary words, movements, and gestures. On another occasion a research worker sat during a lecture with a heap of sunflower seeds in front of her. Every time the lecturer said either "er-r-ahem" or "so to say" she dropped a seed in a bowl in front of her. At the end of the lecture the seeds were counted. It took fifteen minutes. Just so much time had been wasted. Here it seems to me Soviet educationists are in danger of defeating the end for which they are striving—that of a perfect lesson. It may easily happen that the result of their work will be a mechanically perfect lesson, as far removed from the perfect lesson as that of the pre-revolutionary teacher. In the process of eliminating unnecessary words and gestures they may eliminate the teacher's individuality, without which no lesson can be perfect. They will destroy the art of education, and substitute for it a science devoid of imaginative spontaneity, which is not even true science, but a mechanical process. Teaching is not engineering, and the classroom cannot be treated as a factory from which all apparently unproductive processes must be eliminated. However, should this danger not be averted the mechanical condition is not likely to have long life. First, the children will rebel. Secondly, the mobility and fluidity of Soviet education, the fact that there are no sacred traditions, will assure

a discontinuance of the method as soon as its failure is realised. Under their centralised system it may take a year or so for an authoritative decree to be issued. There will have to be frequent conferences and discussions between teachers and directors of education, and the central authority. It is democratic, but it does not allow the individual teacher much freedom.

Each Union Republic has its own Central Research Laboratory; each region of the more developed Republics has its own research institutes and stations. In the case of pedagogical institutes, when the work has been analysed and discussed with the professor, and the report drawn up with diagrams, charts, and graphs, it may be published by the institute for the use of those teachers connected with it. The pedagogical stations and research institutes will similarly draw up a report of their findings for the use of the teachers under their care. The final unification of the material is carried out by the Central Laboratory. Its reports are authoritative over the whole Republic. The Commissariat of Education has to give final approval of the reports, after which they are published either by the laboratory or by the Commissariat. The instructions, or pamphlet, or book, as the case may be, then goes forth into the educational world, and plays an important rôle in teaching technique and school organisation. Teachers are warned not to adopt slavishly all the suggestions contained in the research material. They are only to be used as guides. In practice the warning is frequently disregarded, as may be imagined, and unthinking wholesale adoption of methods described by the Central Laboratory as excellent occurs very largely. The report on the Chebakovsky school has almost become a manual for teachers. It is a school far removed from the centre, with a very able and experienced Head. He overcame the difficulties due to bad accommodation, insufficient equipment, and hostility of parents so well that the work done by the children was as good as could be found anywhere. After the school was discovered by the central educational authorities, a book describing its work in detail, including verbatim reports of lessons, was published. It is hardly an

exaggeration to say that every school has a copy of the book, and I have known teachers refer to it in slavish admiration. Experience and an encouragement to experiment individually will in time remove this grave defect.

At present there are no experimental schools in the sense in which we understand them, where a Head is free to employ any methods, and organise the school on any lines he holds good provided inspection proves the results satisfactory. Nor are there any schools, such as our private schools, which need not be inspected except at their wish. The period of great and varied experimentation came to an end with the abolition of the Project Method in 1981. Syllabuses and methods are finally fixed at the centre and have to be universally adopted. Of course, these are not absolutely rigid. There is considerable scope for variation in detail. The outline is rigid, but the details are to be filled in according to local conditions. As I have already explained, teachers and Heads, through their conferences and discussions of the preliminary plans, have actually a good deal to say in the elaboration of curriculum and syllabus. This production of educational plans is a very lengthy process, and considerable responsibility for the plans rests with the teachers; but, once they have been adopted, it is not a simple matter to change them. In 1982 new syllabuses were adopted for polytechnical work. There was far too much in them, as any experienced teacher could have told at the time. But just at that time the epithet "opportunistic" was being hurled at anyone who did not produce the maximum plans, and probably the teachers did not care to incur this description of themselves. It took two years to alter the syllabus. In August 1984 a new syllabus for polytechnical work was issued, considerably cut down.

The so-called experimental schools are in reality demonstration or model schools to which teachers from the surrounding districts come for help and inspiration. In these schools a good deal of research work is being carried on, and within the framework fixed by the central authority certain minor, though very valuable, experiments are being carried on, such as, for example,

the right length of a lesson for different age groups, etc. To become an experimental school, it must be known as a model school for some time. This regulation was put into force to weed out pseudo-experimental schools. The Commissariat of Education allows an extra grant for experimental schools. A not unexpected result of this was that almost every other school which had a slight variation in method or organisation called itself experimental, and claimed the grant. The number of these rose to thousands. Many of them were actually below the standards demanded from ordinary schools.

The research work in the R.S.F.S.R.<sup>1</sup> is now under the direction of the Central Pedagogical Laboratory in Moscow, with a young and enthusiastic director. He is ably assisted by a staff of experienced educationists, many of whom, like Professor Shatsky, their consultant, had been doing interesting work before the Revolution. One hundred schools supply the laboratory with information. The laboratory began as the First Experimental Station of Narkompros. After some years of work the conclusion was reached that as an experimental station for the whole of the R.S.F.S.R. its work was too diffuse, the interests it embraced too wide, to allow of satisfactory scientific work being done. It was therefore divided up into a central research laboratory in Moscow and an experimental station attached to the Department of Rural Education, in which sphere the need and scope for experiment was much greater. The aim of the laboratory is to discover the best methods and the best type of lesson. "Through the model schools to raise the mass schools to train active children for the building of Communism. For this it is essential to have a groundwork of knowledge, of reading, writing, literature and language, and mathematics. We found that the free methods, the Dalton Plan, Project and Complex Methods, did not supply this knowledge. Hence the change-over to the subject method. Before the decree of August and September 1932, which enforced this change, schoolchildren

<sup>1</sup> Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic, generally, though wrongly, known abroad as Russia.

were expected to spend much time helping the adults in school. They were taught only about the present. Teachers forgot that there existed a past history and a past culture." So said the director of the laboratory to me when discussing his work. In further discussion on method, he claimed that the subject method did make the children interested in their work and take an intelligently active part in the life outside. Whereas the Project Method used adult activities from life outside the school to stimulate interest in the school and in work within the classroom, the present Soviet method used the school and the work within the classroom to stimulate interest and activity in the life outside—a sort of inverted Project Method. The following incidents were two of several given me to show the success of the method. The first occurred in the Gorki Model School in Moscow, in the class which the laboratory director was himself taking for social science.

During one of his lessons a boy told him that he smelt rotting potatoes in one of the courtyards on the way to school. To let food rot, besides being a danger to the community hygienically, was also an anti-social act punishable by law. What was to be done? In one of their social science lessons the children had learnt how the country and the town were governed. They had learnt about the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection Commission;<sup>1</sup> how it was the business of the latter to prevent and punish all anti-social acts, whether in factory, field, office, or courtyard. Immediately the class decided that the Chairman of the local Workers' and Peasants' Inspection Committee should be informed and asked to remove the nuisance. How to inform him. Obviously the quickest and surest way was to telephone. Who should telephone? Why, the boy who had discovered the nuisance. A little hesitatingly, not being sure of the telephone, he went off to do his duty. In a few minutes he returned saying he could not get through. The director was not sure how far this was the real reason. At his suggestion the class decided that the boy make another attempt. This time he succeeded in speaking

<sup>1</sup> Now abolished.



to the chairman, who told him that he would send a cart to-morrow morning to remove the offending potatoes. To-morrow morning came and the potatoes were still there. During the social science lesson there was much excitement and discussion as to the next step. The class then remembered that when a local authority failed in its duty the Procurator of Moscow could be appealed to. It was decided to do so. Again the director offered a suggestion. Vanya should ring up the Chairman of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection and tell him that unless the nuisance was removed immediately the Procurator would be informed. Further, he, the chairman, was to ring Vanya up when he had done his duty. Vanya telephoned, and the chairman promised the matter would be dealt with immediately. The social science lesson, which was now dealing with practical matters, was over, and the children were prepared to wait for the result until next day. At nine that night the chairman telephoned Vanya. His mother replied that he was asleep, and would not be wakened for anyone; would he please ring in the morning. Early in the morning he telephoned Vanya and told him that the rotting potatoes had been removed. Several days later, at the next social science lesson which the director was taking, he was met in the playground by the children shouting, "He's been arrested, he's been arrested." Having for the moment forgotten the incident, he was puzzled by their excitement. Explanations followed, and he learnt that the man was letting his potatoes rot deliberately, and that he had been arrested and sentenced.

Another incident was connected with history. When reading an article in the paper on revolutionary peasants, a boy noticed that the date of Pugatchev's Rebellion was given wrongly. The boy considered this a serious matter. He wrote to the editor telling him that to give wrong information was an anti-social act. Since the paper had some millions of readers, he was misleading the workers and peasants. That was anti-Communist behaviour. What sort of an editor of a Communist paper did he consider himself? This typical incident was made public, when the paper was discussing Soviet schoolchildren, and the boy's

letter to the editor was printed. He added that it was not until he had sent the boy his notes on the offending article was the boy satisfied that the mistakes were due to a printer's error and not to his own ignorance. The mistake had been repeated three times.

The director insisted to me that the method used by them was much more real and effective than the Project Method, which created artificial conditions in order to stimulate interest in learning, instead of using learning to stimulate interest in real conditions. My own impression is that there has not yet been time for a judgment to be formed. It is as yet impossible to tell whether the Soviet child's interest in the life around the school is not due solely to the outside stimulus caused by the very dynamic life of the people. The test will come when the general life becomes less hectic, when it ceases to be for ever at boiling point. When the collective farm and Dneprostroy, the combine and the tractor, are taken as a matter of course, and the successful opening of a new enterprise ceases to be a thrillingly exciting social event, will the ordinary class lesson supply sufficient stimulus to interest the children in life outside the school? At present it is not strictly accurate to talk about "life outside the school." There is as yet no division between the life inside and the life outside. The two are always merging and interacting. If under Communism this interlocking of the two phases of a child's life persists, if the long road to Communism will all the time generate enthusiasm, then it will probably not be necessary to devise all kinds of plans to stimulate children to learn. As I said before, at present one cannot tell.

It was admitted that the perfect lesson had not yet been devised. The laboratory was giving a considerable amount of attention to the problem. It was its business to help the teacher to plan and give a perfect lesson. The director held the accepted view that a lesson which did not interest the children, which did not call forth any activity on their part, which was not related to life outside the school, was a failure. Equally the teacher in whose work a steady improvement was not noticeable

was a failure. We discussed the fairly rigid time-table which is now the order of the day. He admitted that in the primary school where one teacher took all subjects a certain latitude might be allowed. But in secondary schools, where there was specialisation, every teacher must obviously finish to time. It is quite true that the fixed time-table makes great demands on the teacher. For instance, the lesson in arithmetic, or language, must be so planned that all children shall finish approximately at the same time. By various means, such as extra help after school, etc., the teacher must try to level up the worst with the best sufficiently to allow the lesson to be satisfactory to all. Naturally a brilliant child at mathematics could be given more problems, or could be asked to help the slower child. There should always be work which children could do while waiting. No lesson could be judged satisfactory unless it was so planned that every child could finish the work in the time set. I asked about a child who was so keenly interested in a subject that it desired very strongly to go on with it beyond the set time. I cited an instance that I had come across. In an art course for specially interested schoolchildren which an art institute was giving I was present at a lesson when the children did not all finish the work. They begged the master to let them go on. But the time was up. They had had nearly two hours, and the master was not free any longer. The director pointed out that even a genius was a better person if he was adequately equipped to deal with all phases of life. He could only be adequately equipped if in his schooldays he acquired the necessary skill and information. Even a genius must learn to adjust himself to life and the claims of others, and it was good that the children should learn that they could not have all the master's time because he had other duties. Moreover, there were children's clubs and circles in the schools which the children were encouraged to attend, and where they could work under entirely free conditions at whatever they pleased. Here may possibly lie the solution to the education problem. If the child can be supplied with unlimited opportunity after school to express

itself freely in any direction, the inflexibility, the set order, in the classroom may, after all, be the right thing for the child.

In the Gorki Model School in Moscow the laboratory is doing some of its most serious work. It is studying such problems as the seating of the children in the classroom, the length of lesson for different age groups, the right presentation of a lesson, when activity should come from the children and when from the teacher. A series of ten to twelve lessons is planned covering a problem in a subject—such as cubic measure, for example. There is present at each of these lessons a methods mistress, a pedagogue, and a stenographer who has been specially trained by the laboratory. The two former make notes, while the latter takes down everything that happens during the lesson. She literally records everything—all that the teacher says, all that the children say, in the order in which it is spoken; any reactions from the children, when and how they are evoked, when and how each child answers questions, and so on. At the end of the lesson there is a complete record of everything that occurred in the classroom during the lesson. Each of the lessons in the series is given in a different way, the preparation for each being discussed between the teacher, methods mistress, pedagogue, and Head. After each lesson the material is analysed and discussed. The final lesson has to embody the best points of all the preceding lessons. At the end of the series all the material is analysed, discussed at great length, and a report produced, with charts, diagrams, and graphs. When as many as possible of these reports have been made by other schools, too, there is a final deliberation, and then is issued a set of model lessons for the teaching of cubic measure. It is published by Narkompros very cheaply, and all teachers are expected to use the model.

The purpose of this work is not only to arrive at the perfect lesson; it is also to enable teachers to know their children. With this object in view the laboratory sent out a questionnaire to 150,000 children. The replies received were being analysed while I was in Moscow. When the analysis is complete, a report will be drawn up and published, and it will be read and discussed

by all educationists. The knowledge obtained about the children is very simply and effectively depicted on charts. By looking at the chart in his classroom, the teacher can see at a glance the type to which each child belongs, and his characteristics. He quickly discovers the backward ones or the anti-social ones, or those uninterested in school or general life. He can then proceed to find the cause of the difficulties. Having discovered the cause, he is expected to remove it. The onus of a child's progress rests on the teacher. If a child does not come up to the required standard, it is the teacher who is blamed. It cuts no ice for the teacher to say that so and so is lacking in intellectual ability and therefore is no good at science, or that such and such has no mathematical sense and therefore is no good at mathematics. The teacher must find out exactly the cause of the backwardness, and then must find a way of removing the cause.

The Commissariat of Education for the Ukraine likewise issued a questionnaire to its schoolchildren, in this case dealing with the use of their leisure. Much interesting material was collected. I give the reply of a girl of fourteen, as it should interest readers. "How do I spend my leisure? I do not know if it is worth writing about. All say that a cultured person must listen to and understand music, but I heard *Carmen* and neither understood nor was interested in it. All say that a cultured person must be interested in art, but I have been to exhibitions and was not at all interested. That which interests me more than anything is to read great big books. The best recreation for me is to be freed from obligatory work and to sit down with a book whose ending I cannot foresee." This case is being followed up to discover why she does not respond to music and art, whether the reason is hereditary, environmental, or both. Similarly, every case in which a child expresses strong likes and dislikes, or shows any evidence of being above or below the normal, is being investigated. The information gathered is used to improve or correct the child's environment, and so help to make him the Communist citizen towards which they are all striving. I was very interested to learn that all such information was made use

of immediately; it was not just neatly docketed and labelled and put away for someone to stumble across or ferret out. The observation and investigation by the pedologue goes on for a number of years, the mental, physical, physiological, and emotional development being studied during this period. This research should result in a rich addition to the as yet scanty store of scientific knowledge of the child.

It is the aim to establish a model school in each educational area, which shall serve as a stimulus for the other schools. The Central Laboratory is now working on the problem of what constitutes a model school. Until recently there were in the R.S.F.S.R. alone 2,500 schools which had adopted the designation of model, demonstration, or experimental school. The number has been reduced to fifty, forty, or thirty for each region. The social and political significance of the model school is brought home to one by the fact that Socialist competition has been organised between regions for the best model school. The region producing the best one will receive a prize from the Government of 100,000 roubles. The school also will receive a money prize. Besides this the Government will present yearly a banner to the best school in the whole Union. The laboratory must devise a standard by which the model School shall be judged. Many factors besides the academic ones have to be taken into consideration. The school building, equipment, and apparatus, the Head, staff, social organisation, school feeding, out-of-school activities, participation in the activities of life outside, sanitation and hygiene, and even the school cleaners, all play their part. Every school that aspires to the title of model school is inspected and observed by the local pedagogical station, which selects those in its area as suitable aspirants for the title. These in their turn are inspected and observed for several days by the district pedagogical station. The survivals of the second stage then go through the process once more with the regional pedagogical station. The final selections are visited by the pedologues and methods mistresses or masters of the Central Pedagogical Laboratory and Narkompros. On the report

of these two authorities a declaration signed by the Commissar of Education is published giving the schools which are to be known as model schools. The material collected by all the workers during the process of selection will be presented in a report to the Council of People's Commissars for discussion. Here let us pause for a moment to realise that the Council of People's Commissars corresponds to our Cabinet; that this Cabinet, after receiving the report, will appoint a committee which will discuss in detail this report on schools—the organisation, methods of teaching, etc.—treating it with the same importance as it does a report on the transport system, or the next Five-Year Plan for electricity development.

There are many other institutions carrying on educational research. The research into education for national minorities and backward groups, which offers its own peculiar problems, is carried on by the special institutes in Leningrad and Moscow, and, with their help, by regional institutes of the national minorities. In the Institute for Northern Peoples in Leningrad much work was being done on the Latinisation of existing alphabets and the creation of new ones. When I was there in April 1984, several research expeditions were preparing to leave for the Far North. In Moscow, in the Research Institute for National Minorities, I met the leader of the research party which had spent some months in Karaganda, in Kazakstan, in studying the methods and results of education in Kazak schools. The party underwent several months' preparation for the work, including some acquisition of the native language. The enquiry resulted in very valuable material both as regards achievement and failure. The report which will be produced as a result of the enquiry will also include suggestions for improvement, and should do much to help Kazakstan in the attainment of a higher educational standard. The other Asiatic regions find this material equally useful, since they have many problems in common with Kazakstan.

Polytechnisation, too, has its own research institute, which has special schools attached to it in town and country where it

carries on its enquiries and research. This institute was created in 1931. During the short period of its existence it has changed polytechnisation from an aspiration into a fact to be met in every school. The work of the institute is described in greater detail in the chapter dealing with polytechnisation.

The province of art is equally receiving attention. The Boubnov Central House for the Arts Education of Children in Moscow has the as yet uncharted seas of the child as creative artist, the child as emotional entity, to explore. In this sphere research is pointing to a much greater variety in activities, a much greater freedom than in the school work. Very serious work is being done in children's graphic art.

It is in these arts activities, which include drama, active and passive, the cinema, dancing of all kinds, music and the making of musical instruments, puppet shows and puppet making, that the Soviet child will obtain compensation for the possible rigidity of the classroom. Again one wonders whether Soviet educationists are on the road to the solution of an educational problem. It is possible that the combination of disciplined and regulated class teaching with the great variety and freedom offered by the arts opportunities in out-of-school activities for creative self-expression will make the almost perfect education. Whatever may be the answer, educationists the world over would do well to watch the research work being carried on in the U.S.S.R.



## CHAPTER X

### *Examinations*

It is a far cry from the freedom and experimentation of the early days of the Revolution to the present day of discipline and organisation.

When education was made free to all, the shortage of schools and universities and the lack of teachers in actual practice brought it only within the reach of a small percentage of the population. How was the selection to be made? Examinations were swept away with all the rest of the hated capitalist customs. The new criterion, the new test for educational suitability, became social origin. Applicants for places in a school or university had to state their social origin, and many interesting discoveries of worker or peasant antecedents were made. Children of revolutionaries, children of workers and peasants, were given preference. In the universities, students were accepted on the recommendation of first the political and then the trade-union organisations.

Application forms to the universities still have a space for origin, but, since the great increase in the facilities for higher education, this has ceased to have its original significance of exclusion.<sup>1</sup>

To discard entrance tests or examinations was not so serious for the schools. For the universities it was disastrous from the point of view of intellectual attainment. When the Soviet authorities found time to turn their attention to the universities they were shocked at the low standard of education, and became seriously alarmed. Various methods, including propaganda, were tried, with results that were not entirely satisfactory. It became evident that political enthusiasm did not necessarily postulate intellectual ability, that peasant or worker origin did not inevitably endow a child with a fine brain.

<sup>1</sup> February 1936. The column for social origin is now deleted, this information no longer being required.

By the time that this was realised by the authorities, the stability and development of the Soviet system had changed the attitude of the professional classes, who in the majority of cases have travelled from hostility to indifference and from indifference to support. At the same time there had been a great increase in schools and higher educational institutions, so that the question of origin was becoming less important. By 1932, as mentioned in another chapter, a great drive was in progress for the improvement of quality in every sphere of Soviet life, including education. A way had to be found to test quality before its lack was made obvious in bad work; and the Soviets returned to the examination.

It would be quite wrong to regard this as a return to old methods, however. The examinations in Soviet education differ considerably, both in purpose and technique, from the examinations that obtained in Russia prior to the Revolution, or from those that obtain in countries outside the U.S.S.R.

✓ We all recognise that, when posts are limited and applicants are unlimited, some method of selection must be devised; when places in secondary schools and universities are few and applicants are many, again a method of selection must be devised. And we in England have accepted, rather than selected, the examination as the easiest way out of the difficulty. The Soviets have not our problems. There is a scarcity of skilled workers, and opportunities for education are increasing so rapidly that, by 1938, education will be compulsory in all towns and industrial settlements up to eighteen years, and in rural areas up to sixteen years. A few more years after that will see compulsory education up to eighteen years over the whole of the Soviet Union. Therefore the purpose of examinations in the U.S.S.R. is not to select a fortunate or unfortunate few to enter secondary schools, or a still more fortunate or unfortunate few to enter the university. Their purpose is to test knowledge, to find out whether pupils have really covered the syllabus and whether they have intelligently acquired the knowledge demanded by the authorities.

In the universities the entrance examination is a test of

suitability for the training which they give, and, as a stay at a university confers no kind of social prestige, as there are all forms of educational facilities for adults outside the universities, exclusion is no particular hardship.

The literal translation of the Russian word used for examination is "test," and it expresses much more correctly the object of Soviet educationists. The yearly tests are the final record of the degree of knowledge and skill attained by the pupil. Promotion is contingent upon passing the tests. Only in exceptional cases is promotion permitted without taking the tests, and only in exceptional cases is a pupil permitted to leave school without successfully passing the final test. By itself, however, the test is not accepted as a complete record of the pupil's progress. It has to be supplemented by the systematic records kept throughout the year.

An estimate of the pupil's progress is only half the reason for tests. They are used to stimulate the pupil and student towards an increase in the responsibility for his work. They spur him on to greater efforts. They also serve as a form of social control over the school and its staff. The results enable the authorities and the social organisations concerned with the school to judge the work of the teachers. Representatives from the local education authority and from the social organisation connected with the school are present during tests. They discuss the results with the Director or Head, and report on them to the school council and parents' council, where detailed discussion takes place.

The different purpose involves a different technique of examination, though it must be acknowledged that the difference is also due to the inexperience of the mass of young teachers, particularly in the villages. The Commissariat of Education issues very detailed instructions to teachers, as well as to the Heads of schools and Directors of local education authorities. The younger and less experienced teachers must be helped by the abler and more experienced ones to prepare the questions and to organise the tests. In special cases the district education

authority may appoint its instructor of methods to help schools in organising the test. Both the district education authority and the pedagogical laboratories arrange for special consultations with the instructor of methods, and with their ablest teachers, for those who need help and information, particularly in the village schools.

The entire responsibility for the test in each subject rests with the subject teacher, who shares responsibility for the questions and does the marking. Teachers are warned that if anyone is discovered deliberately marking too high or too low he or she will be held answerable to the administrative authorities. On no account are tests to be turned into the old-type examination; and it is the duty of the Director of the local education authority to see that this does not take place. No central authority may issue sets of questions for a number of schools, or even for one school, for any test. All questions, whether for the written or oral tests, must be approved by the Director or Head of the school. Nor are teachers permitted to set the pupils typical questions as revision. To work a syllabus from questions is unthinkable. The pupils are informed beforehand of the particular matter on which they will each be tested and they may prepare for their answer by using the ordinary textbooks.

Questions must be such as will show whether the pupil has learnt the year's work. If for some reason it has been found impossible to complete the year's syllabus, the Head must inform the district education authority of the fact, and that in turn informs the regional education authority. Should the reason be considered unsatisfactory, the Director or Head is answerable. In serious cases it may mean dismissal.

Great attention is paid to the well-being of the pupil during the examinations, the object being simply to test his fitness for promotion into the next form. Preparatory work includes class revision, which has to be carried out during the whole of the second half-year and must not be left for the last fortnight. In order to prevent the nervous state that so often occurs with examinations, explanatory work on the purpose and process of

the tests is carried out, not only with pupils, but with parents, by the staff, by members of the Young Communist League, and by Pioneer organisations, so that there is created an atmosphere of co-operation on all sides. It is impressed on both pupils and parents that tests "are a weapon in the struggle for improved work and for the acquisition of exact knowledge essential to the building of the Socialist State." The tests thus assume a social significance and, though there is still a thrill and an excitement about them, as I found was the case in a school when I happened to be present during test-time, there is no evidence of examination strain. Even so, very nervous children whose work is satisfactory may, on the recommendation of the doctor, be promoted without taking the tests. Children who are ill during test-time may sit for them in the autumn term. Backward children may also have an extra term, and these are to be helped during the summer vacation by the teacher. Where backwardness is due to ill health or a state of nerves the pupil may stay a second year in the same form. These are ordered very quiet and restful summer holidays.

The questions are set according to the ability of each individual pupil, the clever being tested more severely than the ordinary, and it is the weak points, rather than the strong points, on which questions are set. There is no unfairness about this, as the tests are only set to discover the stage reached by each pupil and no scholarships or prizes depend on the results. Prizes are given for a certain standard reached, and the differentiation in examination makes it possible for the less clever but hard-working pupil to receive a prize and be encouraged to further effort.

In primary schools the last ten days of the year, and in secondary schools the last twenty days, are given up to tests. In the latter case there must be a break in the middle of one to two days. Only one subject, either oral or written, may be tested in a day. No lessons are taken during the test-period, the free time being occupied with music and physical culture.

Classes 1 and 2 are not given tests. Promotion here takes

place solely on the teacher's report, which is prepared from the current reports for the year. For the other classes the tests are both written and oral—written ones in Russian language and in literature and mathematics, and oral in any other subjects, according to class. For the oral subjects the teacher divides up the syllabus among the class so that every bit of it is tested. Should a pupil be unable to answer a question, it is put to the whole class, since no question may be left unanswered. The oral questions are typed or written on small cards which are handed out to the pupils.

In classes 3 and 4, written tests last an hour; in classes 5 to 7 inclusive, they last two hours; and in classes 8 to 10, three hours. There is a few minutes' break every hour. In class 3, Russian and mathematics only are tested, both written and orally; while, in class 4, Russian and mathematics are both oral and written, and nature study and geography are oral. In all higher classes the tests in Russian language and in literature are written and oral, while subjects like history, geography, biology, chemistry, physics, etc., are oral. The science tests include practical work. There is also a test in manual work, which includes both the making of an article in the workshop and questions on the technology connected.

The form of marking is "unsatisfactory," "satisfactory," "good," and "very good." From the results of the tests, plus the teacher's report of the current records for the whole year, the yearly report for each pupil is drawn up. This includes work done at home, attendance, absences (with the reasons for them and the measures that were taken to prevent further absences), discipline, general behaviour, social activities, and participation in Socialist competition and shock brigadism. The school keeps a permanent record of reports.

Examinations or tests are equally part of the ordinary routine in higher educational institutions. Every applicant for a place must take the entrance test, irrespective of origin or previous education. However, where academic attainments are equal and a choice has to be made between students, preference is given

to those who are politically active, and to sons and daughters of workers, peasants, and professors. Each institute or university sets its own tests, which are written ones in Russian language and in literature and mathematics, and oral in physics, chemistry, and social science, the last including dialectical materialism, history of the Communist Party, etc. These subjects are compulsory for all, irrespective of the type of institute or the profession for which it is training students.

Students have to take two tests yearly, that at the end of the year being the decisive one. At the end of the course the student has to produce a thesis, which must be publicly defended. On the successful defence he receives a diploma, without which he is not considered qualified to work as a specialist. Two degrees were instituted recently, one comparable to the English M.A. or M.Sc., and the other to a doctorate. These are given on the results of research-work expounded in a thesis.

## CHAPTER XI

### *Pre-School Education*

UNDER the term pre-school education is included the care and education of the child from birth to seven years. From birth until three and a half to four years the children are under the care of the Commissariat of Health. Obviously at this stage it is the physical well-being on which the greatest emphasis is laid. Those who wish, where facilities exist, send their children to the crèche. When they leave the crèche and enter the nursery-infant school, the children are under the care of the Commissariat of Education.

Before the Revolution the child under eight received no attention from any State department. There were, at the beginning of the twentieth century, a very few kindergartens—they could be counted on the fingers of one's hand—run by philanthropic persons, and there were a few for the children of the well-to-do. The mass of children of the workers or peasants were left uncared for. Quite early in the Revolution the problem of the pre-school child demanded attention. The homeless children, a result of blockade, intervention, civil war, and famine, were becoming a menace—a present menace as carriers of disease, and a future menace as potential criminals. The State, however, had little time or means to spare to deal adequately with this problem. The occasion brought forth the means. A voluntary organisation, known as the "Children's Friend Society," was formed to grapple with the task. It collected money and goods, and set up children's homes, crèches, and play-rooms. Among its members were psychologists and educationists, who wrote simple leaflets giving instructions for the care and education of children. Trained workers were very few, and the work was carried on, not only by untrained people, but often by uneducated ones. This state of affairs continued until the end of 1921–22, until the end of the period of economic restoration.



The period of economic reconstruction which followed set up a great demand for workers. The equality of status which the Soviet constitution gave to women recognised no distinction between the sexes for workers, nor permitted any discrimination against women. It safeguarded their economic equality by giving factory-workers and some professional workers two months' leave before and two months' leave after childbirth, with full pay, and their posts had to be reserved. Office-workers and certain other classes get only three months' leave altogether. There was a great influx of women into industry, an influx encouraged by all possible means. This made the care of the pre-school child an urgent problem. To give freedom and security to the present generation at the expense of the future was unthinkable. The State accordingly set about organising crèches and nursery-infant schools. In the early stages of the campaign for the care of the pre-school child an attempt was made to make at least the nursery-infant school compulsory. The lack of buildings, of equipment, and, above all, of teachers brought the attempt to naught. During the very difficult economic period that followed, and when the need for technically qualified workers was burning, attention was diverted from the pre-school child to the primary and secondary school, and factory apprentice-school. The number of children attending pre-school institutions dropped considerably as funds were deflected to the schools for older children. As soon as attention could once again be turned to pre-school problems, a call went out to local organisations, and all kinds of bodies, such as factories, clubs, farms, co-operatives, entered the field to fight for improved conditions for the child under eight. Often activity was spontaneous, without any connection with the call from the centre. It was a result of the development of woman under the new freedom. The Lower Volga area is a case in point: how the women organised a society for the improvement of the cultural life of the workers. The first step was to obtain the tools of culture—reading and writing. But, while the working women were fitting themselves if need be for the post of President (*vide* Lenin), the

future Presidents' children had to be cared for. A room was set aside for the children, and the women took turns in looking after them. They quickly realised the need for trained people in the care of children. The local education authority was asked to help. Five of the most politically active and intelligent women were selected and given an intensive eight days' training. After a short time another group was given an eight days' course. The first group was then released for a three months' course. As the number of workers increased, so the course was lengthened. They were all mothers who were receiving practical and theoretical training at the same time. This attempt was begun in 1928. By 1982, visitors from other areas were coming to see their crèches and nursery-infant schools. Now they have some of the best in the U.S.S.R. This instance of spontaneous activity, which receives whole-hearted encouragement from the central authorities, can be multiplied many times over.

There is much misunderstanding abroad over this pre-school education. Children are not taken away from their parents by the State at birth or at any other time. It is not part of Communist philosophy to destroy family life. On the contrary, the family as a unit is the basis of society. Krupskaya, discussing this question, said: "The parental feeling cannot be suppressed, even if it might assume another form, and bring greater happiness to children and parents. Those working men and women who refuse to hand their children over to children's towns are in the right. The rearing of children in the Socialist Commonwealth must be so contrived that parents themselves have a part in it, together with teachers."

The State can only interfere when it has evidence that the child is being ill-treated. Parents are entirely free to send their children to the crèche or not. Even the nursery-infant school is at present not compulsory. The crèche will never be compulsory, simply because women who wished would ignore the law. Conditions, however, are all in favour of the crèche and the nursery-infant school. The shortage of houses—a Tsarist legacy—and the employment of women make crèches and nursery-infant

schools desirable institutions. The Russians argue that it is infinitely better for the child to be cared for in hygienic, attractive surroundings by properly qualified people than to leave it to the tender mercies of well-meaning but ignorant grandmothers, or even mothers, in wholly unsuitable surroundings. For the mother who works, it is a great relief to know that during her working hours her child will be well cared for. It tends to make her a happier woman and a better worker. But, in spite of all the propaganda for crèches and nursery-infant schools, many mothers either themselves bring up their children or, if they are working, engage a servant to look after them. I have myself been in several homes where the mother said, "Oh, I wouldn't send *my* baby to the crèche," and where quite obviously the baby would have been much better off there.

The working-hours are being decreased, and only in the textile industry do women work eight hours a day; elsewhere the seven-hour day rules, and as soon as economic conditions warrant it the hours will be reduced to six. The mother therefore has a number of hours to spend with her children; though, in many cases, meetings and committees reduce this time considerably. No intelligent person nowadays believes that mothers and children should spend all the waking hours together. The woman's right to the fullest freedom and development is not the only factor in the establishment of crèches and nursery-infant schools. Underlying the whole movement, and inspiring it, is the U.S.S.R.'s recognition of every child's inalienable right to the best conditions of life. They firmly believe that for children to spend some time of the day living and playing collectively is essential for their proper development.

There are three features which characterise Soviet pre-school education, and which differentiate it from nursery and infants' schools in other countries. The first is polytechnisation, which has already been explained in a previous chapter. Pre-school education is closely related to, and linked up with, the industrial life of the country. Four- and five-year-olds know all about the Five-Year Plans, about the various industrial campaigns, about

harvesting and sowing. This is all done through play. The six- and seven-year-olds learn to handle tools, which we in this country, in our ignorance, often prevent children from using. Everywhere I was told that accidents were almost unknown, and, from my personal, even though limited, experience, I see no reason for doubting the truth of this statement.

The second feature is the cultivation of the collective outlook and attitude. All the care in the world is given to the development of the individual, but the individual is developed for the collective good. Through his play and his work the child is encouraged to think collectively. There is much play material which can only be utilised by collective effort. This process of collectivising the child has been considerably slowed down in recent years. Soviet educationists are coming to realise that even a small child requires time to be alone, requires the possibility of working on its own. Much time is now allowed for individual self-expression, and the collectivising process has been adapted to suit more nearly the age and the stage of the child.

The last peculiar feature is the extent to which self-government prevails. Nothing is done for the child which he can conceivably do for himself, either alone or with other children's help. This applies so far only to the institutions; parents in the home are even more backward in this respect in the U.S.S.R. than in this country. As much as is possible is left in the hands of the children: order, tidiness of rooms, care of toys and apparatus, cleanliness, laying tables, etc. The small groups in the crèches, the small classes—twenty-five in the nursery-infant school—make self-government and self-discipline feasible. That primitive form of barbarism, corporal punishment, is a punishable offence in the U.S.S.R. Throughout, the attempt is made to find a positive incentive to good behaviour. Where this fails, public opinion in the form of group criticism, the wall-newspaper, etc., is normally a sufficient deterrent to anti-social behaviour. Where these simple remedies fail, the school child-psychologist examines the child and enquires into home conditions. When necessary, measures are taken to improve these.

“The nursery is not merely an agency designed to care for the physical needs of the child; it is an educational institution. Regardless of its type, it is both a place where children remain for a certain period of time and an educational centre”—so claim Soviet educationists. This educational side of the crèche strikes a visitor very forcibly. It is not just a place where babies are minded while mother is at work; it is a place where the sense training, the emotional training, and the mental training begin. The Institute of Mother and Child, in Moscow, is taking over much responsibility for the child under four. Dr. Esther Konyus, the indefatigable, enthusiastic, and capable Head of the children’s clinic at the institute, is the originator and creator of many of the features that characterise the environment of the very young child. Her persistence and enthusiasm have overcome almost insuperable obstacles of red tape and inefficiency. She has created a museum in the institute, such as is to be found nowhere else. Here mothers and pre-school workers, peasants from the State and collective farms, students from the university, and factory-workers come from all parts of the country to learn about the hygiene, sanitation, food, clothes, toys, and equipment necessary for a crèche. There are elaborate models for wealthy institutions. There are the simplest models such as can be made, by any worker or peasant, from birch or other wood with odds and ends that are to be found anywhere. There are models of portable crèches for State and collective farms which can be used in the fields during harvesting. Everything is explained very simply. The design and the arrangement of the exhibits are such that the attention is held at every point.

Dr. Konyus has divided her territory into districts. She has put every district in charge of a doctor and a nurse, who are responsible for the welfare of the children under four in their district. The initiative must always come from them. In her own room are plans of the districts. The walls are covered with charts and diagrams which she uses to illustrate her lectures to her doctors and nurses.

The Central Museum of Mother and Child, in Moscow, is one

of the wonders of Soviet achievement. It is arranged with the usual artistic and psychological insight that one has come to expect in Soviet museums, and it also displays high scientific attainment. Here the learned professor and the illiterate mother can both receive help on pre-natal and post-natal questions.

The country is rapidly being covered with a network of crèches. It seemed to me that wherever I went there were new crèches in Moscow. They are financed in three ways: completely supported by the Commissariat of Health; partly supported by the Commissariat and partly by factories, clubs, housing associations, State and collective farms, and entirely supported by the latter. Those I visited in 1984—and they were many—showed a marked improvement in every respect over conditions in 1982. Obvious political propaganda was almost wholly eliminated. There was much greater attention paid to beauty, and the staffs were better qualified. There is a great drive for beauty in the life of the children. The crèche attached to the Museum of Mother and Child, in Moscow, was almost overwhelming in its beauty. The play-room for crawlers is a large hall. In the centre is a pond with goldfish. Surrounding this were masses of the most gaily coloured flowers. Large balls of gorgeous hues were suspended from various contrivances. Pictures, toys, the exquisite cleanliness, all combined to make an indelible impression of a joyous atmosphere.

All the newer crèches are run more or less on the same lines, and, in describing one of the latest type, I will be describing what will be general within a few years. This was a new crèche, barely finished, in a workers' district, maintained by the factory for the service of whose workers it has been built. Architecturally it is well planned. The rooms are very large and lofty, admitting the maximum of light. Each age-group has its own entrance, its own receiving-room, bathroom, chute down which to send soiled linen, and small kitchen for the preparation of light food. Each room has a veranda where the children sleep summer and winter, in the latter case in sleeping-bags. There is a large kitchen, where the chief meals are prepared, as well as a laundry.

The crèche has considerable ground, which was being laid out into playgrounds and gardens at the time of my visit. The Director of the crèche has received both medical and educational training. Each group (the numbers vary from twelve to fifteen) has a qualified person in charge, helped by an untrained assistant. In the child-study room much work is done with the parents. The crèche is one of the most powerful centres for parents' education.

The children are brought by the mothers before the latter go to work. Every child is examined in the receiving-room before being passed into the bathroom. After the bath it is given a clean set of clothes belonging to the crèche. Its own are put away in a locker, each child having its own locker. Breakfast follows. After this, very tiny babies are placed in cots; those who begin to sit up or can crawl go into the play-pen. The toddlers have a well-equipped room with very good educational and play material. They spend from one to two hours in the morning out of doors, which time includes a walk. It is a common sight along the streets of Moscow to see a file of two- and three-year-olds taking their airing in charge of one or two adults. This has the educational aim of enlarging the children's experience and widening their horizon. There are some entirely open-air crèches during the summer. Open-air activity is followed by washing, which precedes dinner. After dinner comes two hours' sleep. On waking, there is usually a drink of milk, then indoor play. Tea is given if the mother works late.

The indoor play material for the toddlers consists of apparatus very similar to that of Froebel and Montessori, by which the child is enabled to develop all its senses. Coloured crayons and paper are also provided. As mentioned before, the building-blocks are large, needing co-operation in their manipulation. All the rooms are attractively decorated and give a feeling of light and space.

The greatest attention is paid to health and to prevention of disease. All visitors have to don an overall before entering the crèche. Mothers are not allowed inside except to feed the babies,

when they are required to put on overalls and have their breasts sterilised. The separate entrances, etc., minimise the risk of infection and examination by the doctor aids in the early detection of illness. This crèche is setting the standard; not all by any means come up to it. There are many where the standard of cleanliness is still very low, where the assistants are untrained and often uneducated. But it is only a matter of time before all the crèches reach the highest standard.

In the factories where women are employed on night-work the children remain all night in the crèche.

Another type of pre-school institution is the railway-station children's room. Every main-line station has such a children's room. Some are well equipped, others not so well, but they all supply an urgent need. They have been organised both to relieve the parents and to remove the children from that most unhealthy environment still to be found in the stations where masses of peasants and others congregate to wait one or even two days for a place in a train. In Bryansk Station in Moscow there is a very large airy room with cots round the four walls. In the centre is a play-pen with various kinds of toys. There is a bathroom with several baths. All children receive a bath on arrival. During their stay they are provided with suitable food. The Director, who was medically trained, told me that she carried on much educational work with the parents, and that they were very appreciative. It was evening when I visited the station, so that all the children were asleep.

Children's summer and winter playgrounds, for those for whom there is no crèche accommodation, are increasing in number. Dr. Konyus was one of the pioneers of this movement. She showed me over one of which she felt especially proud. It lay between the Institute of Mother and Child and the Palace of Labour and was a tribute to the enthusiasm and love of children of Soviet women. It had been the usual courtyard, perhaps a little more littered with rubbish than is quite customary. The institute staff, including the doctors, turned this wilderness into a children's paradise. They removed rubbish and stones,



dug and planted, and built. There is a grass-plot for playing on; there are charming flower-beds, little hills for tiny feet to clamber up, a tiny bridge, with steps up and down, spanning a tiny lake in which the children can splash and paddle. There is a shelter from sun and rain. An old iron shed has been converted into a children's dining-room and play-room for winter and rough weather. In summer meals are taken out of doors.

The nursery-infant schools continue the work of education and upbringing. The régime in all these is more or less the same. The one described below is again typical of the best. I am deliberately describing the best, because the worst, which is undoubtedly very poor, will before many years are out disappear entirely, while the best will be permanent. And one does not have to go to the U.S.S.R. to see badly run institutions.

It was quite by chance that we visited this particular nursery-infant school, in a new workers' district in Moscow. The reader may imagine my delight when the Director who received us turned out to be a friend of mine whom during her stay in London I had acquainted with our best nursery schools. Some at least of the good features of this nursery-infant school can be traced directly to English influence. It is one of three in a colony of flats. The maximum of children is eighty, but there were only seventy-five on roll when we visited it. There were three groups of twenty-five, which is the maximum for a class in nursery-infant schools. Group 1 was for children of four to five, group 2 for children of five to six, and group 3 for children of six to seven. There was a staff of twenty, including domestics: the Director, six teachers, a school artist, a child-psychologist or pedagogue, four maids, a cook, laundrymaid, handyman, and three workers for night-duty. Each group has two teachers, between whom the ten-hour day is divided. This nursery-infant school is doing research-work for the Commissariat of Education and is therefore receiving a grant from it. Except for that, it is maintained by the factory whose workers it serves. Parents who can afford to do so pay from ten to twenty-five roubles a month. The three summer months are spent in the country.

There are general meetings of the whole staff and the parents' school-committee to discuss general questions. The teachers meet once a month to discuss more specific problems. A parents' aid-committee helps with such things as celebrations, summer camps, equipment, etc.

Every teacher has to draw up a detailed plan of work for the month, as well as a daily time-table. She must give three reports a year on each child. Besides this, she has to keep a daily record of the progress of each child in all its habits ; in cleanliness, table manners, etc.

In this school, as in all the best schools, there is much educational work carried on with the parents. The centre of this and of the work in psychology is the pedagogics' study. Round the walls of this room are charts and diagrams dealing particularly with health and hygiene, and the ordered life a child should lead. The most striking in design bore the slogan, " Every parent must know how to bring up a child." Part of one wall is taken up with children's work which is the result of questionnaires to discover how the children understand the social science given them. They answer such questions as to who is Lenin or Stalin, what is a collective farm, what do they know about their factory, about Pioneers, the Red Army, etc., etc. This material is discussed between the staff and the school psychologist and helps to mould future talks to children.

A parents' council meets monthly with the staff and psychologist to discuss general problems. Individual problems are discussed individually. Parents are encouraged to come to the pedagogics' study. Active help is given by the teachers, who visit the homes. In this school a teacher generally visits each child's home once a month. The parents are always glad to see the teacher, whom they regard as a great friend, I was told. The visits to the home, which enable the teacher to obtain first-hand knowledge of the conditions in which the child lives, and which enable intimate relations to be established between the parent and teacher, bear the most fruitful results. It is possible by this means to see how far school suggestions are carried out in the

home, and what are the difficulties in the way of their fulfilment. It also helps to ensure harmony between the home and school.

It might interest readers to have the school régime. The day lasts from 7.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. Those children whose mothers work late or at night spend the night in the school. They sleep in the rest-room. From 7.30 to 8.30 a.m. there is changing into school clothes, washing hands, toilet, free play, and some physical exercises. At 8.30 a.m. there is breakfast, consisting generally of porridge, tea or milk, bread and butter, and jam. At 9.20 a.m. begin lessons: drawing, carpentry, nature-study, reading, writing, and numbers. The four-to-five-year group has from twenty-five to thirty minutes a day formal work, each lesson lasting not more than fifteen minutes. The five-to-six-year group has forty to forty-five minutes formal work, each lesson lasting twenty minutes. The six-to-seven-year group has one hour's formal work a day, each lesson lasting thirty minutes. After lessons there is outdoor play, including a walk. At 12.30 p.m. there is dinner, consisting generally of soup, fish or meat, and some vegetables. Vegetables, except potatoes, are still difficult to obtain in the winter. After dinner comes what is known as the "dead hour." From 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. the children go to sleep. They undress, put on pyjamas or nightdress, and lie down on camp-beds or in cots. The six-to-seven-year-olds rarely sleep more than one and a half hours. At 4 p.m. there is milk and biscuits or buns, then play till 5.30 p.m. The children who are staying the night have supper at 6.30 p.m., consisting of milk or cocoa, bread and butter, salad when in season, and a savoury of some kind. At 8 p.m. they go to bed. There were twenty children spending the night here.

The school was new, well planned, and well built. The rooms were light, airy and sunny. Each group had its own combined working- and dining-room. There was ample cupboard room for apparatus and equipment. All the cupboards are low so that the children can be responsible for the material and for the tidiness. Each room has a nature-corner with plants and an aquarium. There is another corner, with a stand on which are exhibited

books made by the children. The writing in the books is done by the teachers, the illustrations by the children. The formal teaching of reading, writing, and numbers does not begin until six years. The six-to-seven-year group had a cupboard for domestic tools, such as brushes, pans, dusters, and for cooking-utensils, such as pastry-boards, rolling-pins, egg-whisks, etc. There is a separate workshop for woodwork for the oldest group. The tools they use are hammers, saws, and planes, all made to the specifications of the Institute of Polytechnisation. They make all kinds of articles for use in the school or the home, or models. Sometimes the suggestions come from the teacher, sometimes the idea originates with the child.

There are two rest-rooms, both large; one an ordinary room, with plenty of windows, the other an open-air room, with sleeping-bags for the winter. One of the most charming rooms is the children's reading-room and library. In a prominent place, compelling attention, is the slogan, "Lenin tells you to work and struggle, books teach you how." In a cupboard there are books which the children may borrow, or they may bring their own to read or look at, in an atmosphere that is just as it should be. On a stand are examples of children's books, including some from other countries, which the children may examine. Thus early is encouraged a love of books and a knowledge of their care.

There is a large hall with some gymnastic apparatus. In the centre of the hall are traffic lights to teach the children road sense. The usual very large building-blocks are to be found here too. These afford the children great satisfaction, for they can make houses and factories big enough for them to sit inside. The size demands the co-operation of at least two children in their manipulation, so that an opportunity is afforded for training in collective work.

All the classrooms are very attractively decorated. There is a noticeable absence of political posters, their place being taken by very pleasant pictures of landscapes and animals painted by the school artist. These are changed every three months. Altogether there is an atmosphere of great freedom and friendliness,

and at the same time of discipline and orderliness. The numerous duties performed by the children, such as handing out mugs and toothbrushes, laying and clearing the table, the responsibilities of monitors for order, cleanliness, for the nature-corner, the book-corner, for apparatus, lay the foundations of self-reliance and self-government, call forth the children's initiative and give them much satisfaction. Drawing, painting, singing, and dancing satisfy their emotional needs. They receive much affection from the adults who are working with them.

I was present at the school's May-Day Festival, which was not specially arranged for visitors. The children performed songs and dances of different lands enchantingly. A Punch-and-Judy show, and tea followed by a present to each child, finished off a very happy afternoon. Fathers and mothers came to fetch their children. It was very much like a party in an English infants' school, only the numbers were much smaller.

## CHAPTER XII

### *The Ten-Year School*

I HAVE headed this chapter "The Ten-Year School," not because the ten-year school is universal, but because I am trying to make this book on Soviet education up to date for as long as possible—not an easy task when one has regard to the continuous change in detail and in application of principle, and to the rapid development that is one of the outstanding characteristics of Soviet life. It is hoped that by the end of 1987 every school in the towns and industrial settlements will be a ten-year school. Again let me remind the reader who may be a visitor to the U.S.S.R. not to be misled by the continual emphasis on the word "factory" in connection with the school which he is likely to hear. It is important to remember that by "worker" the Soviet has in mind a highly cultured citizen, highly skilled technically and able to turn his hand to anything. It should also be realised that every citizen will in the U.S.S.R. answer to the term "worker."

I intend here to describe the methods, régime, and conditions in the best schools. It stands to reason that a considerable number of schools in remote districts will not come up to this standard. There are still numbers of schools badly organised, badly equipped, suffering from unsuitable building and lack of apparatus, and staffed with unqualified teachers. All these defects are observed and reported upon by the research workers and inspectors sent out periodically by different educational institutes. The Press, too, sends out its correspondents to report upon schools, and much publicity is given to shortcomings. Everyone is concerned with the improvement of schools, and this improvement is being carried out as fast as conditions permit. Educational grants increase every year.<sup>1</sup> The only obstacles in the way of raising all schools to the same high level

<sup>1</sup> See expenditure table.

are the still insufficient production and the time needed to train teachers adequately. It is for these reasons that I am describing what is best, and not because I do not realise, or wish to acknowledge, educational inefficiency.

There are at present three different grades of schools corresponding to age groups: primary, eight to twelve years; incomplete secondary, eight to fifteen years; and secondary, eight to eighteen years. The first two grades will disappear in time, and the last, the ten-year school, will remain. The second grade school is often referred to as the seven-year school. Very often the preparatory class for the seven-to-eight-year-olds is attached to the ten-year school. The schools still work in two shifts, the primary school in the morning and the incomplete secondary and secondary school in the afternoon. The completion of seventy-two new schools in Moscow in 1985 will help towards the elimination of the two-shift system in that city. The town schools are very large, including all the age groups; they range from 1,000 to 1,500 children. Usually the same Director is head of the two shifts. For this he receives two salaries. Many of the schools are still in adapted buildings, and so suffer from many drawbacks, but the new schools are very good. The classrooms are light and airy, with a sufficiency of cupboards. There are workshops for manual work—sometimes as many as four—and a workroom for the youngest class. A physics and chemistry laboratory, a biology laboratory, a nature room, an art room, an assembly hall fitted for cinema and with stage, a gymnasium, a dining-room, a medical inspection room, a pedagogics' room for discussion and research work on methods, a staff room, and a room for the Head, are usual in all the well-equipped schools. Many schools have a semi-open-air rest-room for the younger children. Some schools, like the Jewish school in Kharkov, have hot and cold showers, and a haircutting room.

The school staff, apart from the Director and teachers, includes a mistress of methods, sometimes permanent, sometimes only visiting, a psychologist, a cultural supervisor, a doctor, a nurse, and manual instructors. Every school has one or two

leaders of the Young Communist League, known as Pioneer Leaders, usually delegated by the factory to which the school is attached. They help with the non-academic side of school life. I met them frequently, discussing school problems with the Director. They are allowed time off from the factory for this work. There is also what is known as the technical staff—the cook, maids, and cleaners. Working with the staff is a committee known as the Assistance Committee. Its members are elected by the Parents' Council.

This committee helps the school in innumerable ways—in the organisation of school meals, in obtaining financial assistance for extra activities, in arranging for summer camps, in assisting with clothes for needy pupils, children of unskilled workers who often do not yet earn enough to supply all their needs. The members sometimes accompany the children to the theatre or cinema. They persuade the factory to give a donation for any special requirements.

Every school has a Parents' Council, which meets regularly to receive a report from the Director and to discuss school affairs, such as the progress of the pupils, etc. A delegate from the Parents' Council sits on the School Council.

The school year<sup>1</sup> is from September 1st to May 20th for primary schools in urban areas, and to June 1st in primary schools in rural areas. For incomplete secondary and secondary schools it is from September 1st to June 1st for urban schools, and from September 1st to June 10th for rural schools. There are winter and spring holidays, each of two weeks. The teachers do not have the full summer vacation. Part of that time must be spent in preparing syllabuses and time-tables, in conferences and discussion of their work. In the winter and spring holidays, too, the teachers are expected to spend some time in conferences. About 75 per cent of the town children spend six weeks of their summer holiday in camps, but not under canvas.<sup>2</sup> For the rest of the time all kinds of activities, including open-air libraries,

<sup>1</sup> This has been altered now (January 1936). See Appendix II.

<sup>2</sup> Canvas for sleeping is now becoming the practice (January 1936).



are arranged for them in the parks where cultural workers are in charge.

The length of the day<sup>1</sup> varies with the age group. Classes 1 and 2, the youngest, spend four hours a day at lessons; Class 3 spends four to five hours; Class 4 spends five hours; and Classes 5 to 10, six hours a day. School begins at 8.30 a.m. or 9 a.m. There is a five-minutes interval for physical jerks taken in the classroom, usually by one of the pupils. There is a mid-morning break of fifteen minutes spent out of doors or in the hall, when the monitors, Pioneers, or Pioneer Leaders, organise collective games, usually with music or dancing.

The urban schools have a six-day week—five days school and one day holiday; the rural schools have a seven-day week—six days school and one day holiday. All schools provide hot dinners, and many provide breakfasts. The cost is very little. Those who cannot afford to pay are put on the free list. Dinner consists of soup, meat or fish, and sometimes a sweet or tea. There was plenty of bread and potatoes when I was there, but a scarcity of green vegetables. Macaroni was often served instead of a vegetable. The Russians eat far too much starch. On the various occasions when I had meals in the schools I found them adequate enough, but unattractively cooked and served. I imagine this is due to shortage of foodstuffs, for the Russians are very good cooks. I have rarely tasted such delicious food as in Kharkov in 1934, and one day, when I asked the maid who had taken charge of me in my friend's house, whether I could bring a friend in to dinner, she produced a four-course dinner that would have delighted the heart of any epicure. All this by the way. A serious attempt was being made to improve the service and the dining-rooms. Table-cloths and flowers had made their appearance in many schools. Waiting at table is done by monitors.

In Chapter VII I have discussed the question of discipline, and in Chapter VI the numerous circles which the children are encouraged to organise. Though the circle work is carried on after school, in charge of other workers, the teachers are expected to

<sup>1</sup> This has been altered now (January 1936). See Appendix II.

take an active part in their organisation, and to link up whenever possible the class work and the circle work, particularly in such subjects as literature and art.

In the primary school the class teacher takes all the subjects except manual instruction. In the incomplete secondary and secondary schools the teachers specialise. Ten subjects are taken in the primary school: mathematics (arithmetic and simple geometry), Russian language, literature, nature study, geography, social science, polytechnised labour, art, music, and physical culture. A foreign language is taken in Class 5 (twelve years). In the secondary schools there are eighteen subjects: Russian language and literature, foreign language, history, social science, geography, nature study,<sup>1</sup> mathematics (arithmetic, algebra, and geometry), trigonometry, physics, chemistry, biology, polytechnised labour, industrial drawing, art, music, physical culture, technology of materials used in manual work, and military studies. Not all the subjects are taken by all classes. The last two begin in Class 8 for one hour a week. The time allowed for social science has recently been cut down.<sup>2</sup>

The class lesson is the basic method of teaching, but this must be supplemented by excursions to museums, factories, parks, etc., and by practical work whenever possible, such as map and model making; and for the older pupils by private study. I sat through many lessons; some were very interesting, others were dull and obviously bored the children. Here, as everywhere, much depends on the teacher. He or she is expected to prepare each lesson very fully, and to collect the necessary material, specimens, apparatus, etc. The cinema is being adopted as a teaching aid.<sup>3</sup> It is planned to have a cinema room in each school, and to have all teachers trained in the technique necessary for the cine-lesson. When planning the term's work, the teacher must include two or three cine-lessons. Each lesson takes up two ordinary lessons. A cine-lesson needs much preparatory work. The teacher, having seen the film, must note where additional

<sup>1</sup> In senior classes, nature study includes physiology and biology.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix II.

<sup>3</sup> See *Sight and Sound*, July 1935.

explanatory material will be required, and obtain any supplementary material necessary, such as maps, diagrams, charts, experimental apparatus, models, etc.

For younger pupils the film lasts fifteen minutes, with about two intervals, when any difficult points are cleared up. For older pupils the film lasts twenty to thirty minutes, with only one interval, also used for explanations. The cinema is in no way to replace the teacher, textbooks, nature, experiments, or excursions. It is to be used as an aid to teaching, to amplify and clarify knowledge the children have gained during the ordinary lessons. Besides the cine-lesson there is the cine-lecture, which can be given to 200-250 children at a time, of approximate age groups. This of necessity will be more general, but it must be used to help with class work, and must be well prepared. In this instance the lecture is conducted by a cine-lecturer, a teacher who has received special training for this work. Teachers may now specialise in this branch of education, since it will be used very extensively in adult education in clubs, factories, and on farms. As in the cine-lesson, there must be an introduction and a running commentary, questions and discussion, and homework set on the film.

At present the use of the cinema is confined to comparatively few schools. Educational institutes are urging that it shall become general, and it is only a question of time before this is the case. There are as yet not enough suitable films, or cinema-equipped schools, or teachers trained in the technique of cine-education. All these difficulties are being dealt with. The cinema is a State industry, and when production plans are being drawn up a section of the plan will be allotted to educational films. These will be produced in conjunction with educational experts. Since the expression "the country cannot afford" is never used with regard to education, schools will very quickly be equipped for cine-work. Free courses for training teachers in this work are already in existence.

Excursions must be used as a teaching aid in almost every subject. They include visits to picture galleries, museums,

factories, the country, farms, the Zoo, theatre, opera, etc. In the primary schools, one afternoon a week is given up to excursions. When the term's syllabus is drawn up, excursions are allotted to each subject. Each excursion requires preparatory work. The children are told the purpose of each, and what they are required to learn from it. When I was at the Gorki Model School in Moscow, a class of children were preparing to see the opera *Tsar Sultan*. At the music lesson at which I was present the mistress went through the score with the class, explaining, questioning, and so on. Pushkin, the author of the fairy-tale, was being studied in the literature lesson.

At this stage it would perhaps be most useful to take each subject, and, as far as possible, give the method used, and the syllabus for typical classes. Let us begin with the arts subjects.

I have before me the instructions and suggestions for arts education issued by the Commissariat of Education for students in training-colleges and universities. In the centralised system of education that prevails in the U.S.S.R. it means that these instructions and suggestions will be adopted in the main by everybody. We are therefore justified in the assumption that the syllabuses and methods laid down will be those generally used. There is a preface by Madame Lunacharskaya, in which she says that the material in the book is based on the theoretical and practical work carried out by the Central House for the Arts Education of Children, in Moscow. It is intended to help, not only students in training-colleges and universities, but the ordinary teacher and the out-of-school worker with children in this sphere. All forms of arts teaching are dealt with, except the wireless. This is omitted because so far not much work has been done with the wireless in school, and there is not enough material upon which to base any instructions or suggestions. This subject is now receiving attention. I will now quote from the introduction: "Arts work in the school must play a great educational and cultural rôle. The arts subjects, properly taken, increase the general development of children, facilitate their studies in many directions, and help to improve their general progress. Thus the

graphic arts afford the children the means of thinking concretely. . . .

"Theatrical work, properly taken in the school, can have an incalculable educational value. . . . Music also trains the attention and teaches children to follow such complicated processes as the execution of musical works. . . . Arts work must acquaint the children with the best examples of the artistic heritage left by the past, using for this purpose all possibilities—museums, theatres, concerts, and, in small towns or villages, reproductions of pictures, wireless, and their own performances in clubs, etc. The school must also make examples of modern proletarian art an integral part of the children's consciousness, of their habits and their life. . . .

"Art and music in the secondary schools must be taught systematically, in accordance with the age peculiarities of the pupils. They should be given, though not a large, yet an important amount of knowledge in arts and an acquaintance with the many phases of life.

"The graphic arts must teach the children the importance of printing, including illustrating, and acquaint them with the making of books and with the technique of printing. Similarly, a definite course has to be taken in the grammar of music. . . .

"The methods of work, themselves based in a great measure on collective activity, are educating the children in collectivism. They teach them how to subserve their will to the good of the collective, to unite their own forces with the forces of others. They lead to a conscious discipline essential for the attainment of the agreed collective aim. Well-executed music by a large choir, a well-produced play, the well-arranged and carefully executed artistic decorations of the school for a celebration, are evidence of a high discipline among the pupils, which enables them to unite their forces and firmly and unbendingly carry out the decision taken. The well-planned arts self-activity of the pupils in the school will give a definite direction to their creative instinct and initiative, and will teach them to fill their leisure with varied and independent activities, the stimulus towards

which has been given in the school. . . . Well-planned and well-thought-out arts education enables the school to discover the specially gifted pupils, in whatever direction, and to prevent talent from being stifled. The aim of the school is not to turn the children into professional art workers, *but with the help of art to train them for life*. At the same time the discovery of the specially gifted children, though a subordinate activity, is a very important function of the school. By directing the gifted pupils to work in the special institutes, the school is co-operating in increasing the number of creative proletarian artists.

"All pupils must receive a well-defined amount of knowledge and skill in the arts, and must be trained so that, when they begin life, this new generation shall enter into the artistic self-activity of the proletariat, and shall raise the standard of this self-activity. The knowledge and skill which the great mass of youth will acquire in the schools will raise the general cultural level of the workers. . . .

"The arts education of the pupils cannot be limited to the work of the specialist teacher in the art or music lesson, or to the work of the circles out of school. It must become the active concern of the entire school. All instruction in the school must have as its aim, side by side with the teaching of the children and their political education, an arts education. With this purpose in mind, every teacher must aim at giving her lessons in a form which will help arts education in so far as the particular subject makes this possible. On the other hand, every teacher must use all the possibilities of the arts in order to make a lesson more vivid, clearer, more varied, and richer in emotional content.

"Every school should have its Arts Committee, with the literature specialist at the head. It should include the art and music specialist and the director of dramatic circles. Together they must work out a programme of visits to galleries, exhibitions, etc."

**Music.** This includes singing, theory, reading, musical appreciation, and musical biography. Up to the present, choral

singing plays the leading part in music education both in town and country. From the various occasions on which I listened to children singing in and out of school it was quite obvious that there was a great shortage of qualified and competent teachers of singing. However, these are being trained very fast, but some years will be needed to make them experienced. Meanwhile, great stress is being laid on the technique of singing. Children are taught voice production, breathing, diction, rhythm, harmony and expression. The teacher has to become acquainted with each pupil's voice during the first two and a half years of its school life. In the younger classes the music lesson of forty-five minutes is divided into two periods. The first twenty minutes are for singing, and the second twenty-five minutes for rhythmic work and musical appreciation.

Beginning with Class 2 (nine years), musical terms, staff reading, and conducting are introduced. Talks and explanations dealing with the musical and literary content of songs, in order to connect music with general life, are part of the course.

Beginning with Class 4 (eleven years), mutation is introduced. Soviet educationists think that the opinion generally held that boys, while their voices are changing, should not sing, nor even speak loudly, is incorrect. In ordinary life, in their free time boys sing and shout just as much at this period as at any other. They claim that it has been proved in practice that boys can sing without any harm provided the singing is restrained, and for a very short period (five to seven minutes) and within their compass. The importance of this lies in the fact that it will prevent boys cutting themselves off from the class and losing their musical skill. When the boys and girls have their lesson together, they must sing together. The curtailment of actual singing time for the boys is made up with reading, playing in the orchestra, etc.

The care of the pupil's voice is one of the responsibilities of the teacher. He is asked to put a notice on the wall with the following instructions: " (1) Don't shout, or sing too long or too loudly;

you may ruin your voice, and a ruined voice is difficult to put right. (2) Keep your throat free from colds. (3) Breathe through the nose; after singing, don't go out at once into the cold air. (4) Don't wear a scarf round your neck."

Musical theory properly begins in Class 3 (ten years), but preparatory work for this is already begun in Classes 1 and 2. "The musical material used in the primary school must be such as will fulfil the aim of making music become an integral part of the child's life, such as will train his musical taste." In the secondary schools the material used has an element of historicity, but is arranged according to complexity and according to chronological sequence.

Classes 5 and 6 study individual composers. They are given biographical information and a picture of the epoch. Class 5 studies works of Beethoven, Schubert, and Grieg. Class 6 does Rimsky-Korsakov, Borodin, Moussorgsky. In modern music the work includes Soviet national creative music, music of the different nationalities of the U.S.S.R., modern mass songs and their sources, and the old revolutionary songs.

Class 7 (fourteen years) does "Music of the Great French Revolution," including periods preceding and following it, also "The beginning of the development of Russian music." Class 8 studies Chopin, Schumann, and Tchaikovsky. It finishes the course with the theme "Music of the October Revolution in the U.S.S.R. and abroad." I have not yet received the syllabus for Classes 9 and 10.

The music time of the whole course is divided roughly as follows: Classes 5 and 6, choral work 50 per cent, musical appreciation 20 per cent, theory 20 per cent, talks 10 per cent; Classes 7 and 8, choral work 45 per cent, musical appreciation 25 per cent, theory 15 per cent, talks and reading 15 per cent.

Musical theory for the primary and secondary schools includes an understanding of the most important musical forms—opera, symphony, overture, sonata, etc., an ability to distinguish the difference between two themes, the ability to conduct, a



knowledge of the structure and characteristics of different musical instruments, and a knowledge of the sound of different groups of instruments. Here concerts and wireless are used.

*Art.* Soviet educationists do not consider that it is good to leave the pupil entirely free, the teacher merely being present in the class. They hold that such work has no good results, and very soon exhausts the creative activity of the pupil. The teacher's guidance must take the form of helping the pupil to discover his meaning and feeling, to express more fully, through drawing, his knowledge; his conception with regard to the subject selected. Hence free drawing begins with a talk between the class and the teacher. By means of questions the teacher strives to find out the children's ideas and to clarify them. While the pupils are drawing, the teacher helps the weaker children individually with advice; he sees that the children are using the materials in the best way.

In the primary school, art includes the following divisions: (1) Free drawing. (2) Themes and illustrations (from memory and imagination). (3) Clay modelling and construction. (4) Script, slogans and posters. (5) Drawing of separate subjects (memory and imagination). (6) Object drawing, single and group (Class 4). Construction includes the making of models for settings of various kinds from waste material or anything which the children can collect. In the rural schools this is often carried on out of doors, the children using sand, paints, brushes, and even water, to produce a scene.

The art work in the secondary schools includes: (1) Art technique, i.e. the ability to depict objects in three dimensions on a flat surface, and enough detail to indicate its functional purpose. The teaching of art technique is based chiefly on the development of spatial thinking of the pupil. (2) Object and memory drawing. (3) Composition and arrangement. (4) A knowledge of art (painting, sculpture and architecture). The art work is correlated with other subjects. It is used in history, geography and nature study. The art teacher discusses the

work to be done with the other subject teachers. Classrooms and halls are frequently decorated by the children. The senior pupils are responsible for the artistic arrangements, decorations, banners, posters, grouping of pupils, for all school and political celebrations. This work is done in brigades. It is so arranged that a different set of pupils is responsible for different celebrations, thus giving every pupil an opportunity to partake in the work. Competitions are arranged between brigades. There is contact between the school art teacher and the club art instructor.

*Dramatic Work.* Theatrical work has no place in the timetable as such, yet there is hardly a school in which this work, in practice, does not find a place. In one form or another it is used in every school—for revolutionary anniversaries, for celebrations, etc. The work is considered so valuable that it is being carefully planned. For the adolescent, theatrical work is considered of great importance. Dramatic work is closely linked up with such subjects as history, social science, and literature. It is recommended that the instructor for the dramatic work in the circles out of school should be on the staff committee, and plan her work with these subject teachers, as well as with the art and music teachers. With Classes 1 and 2, acting is of the very simplest, and is used in nearly every lesson. Here the play is generally very quickly improvised, without sets or text learnt by heart. In Class 3 the work is more prepared, and in greater detail. Class 4 performs not only sketches, but short two- or three-act plays. At the end of the primary school the pupils are expected to know the following: what is a theme, what is material out of which the theme develops. They must understand that in all productions the foundation is activity, and find out for themselves the relation between the words and actions of the piece. They are expected to be able to think out a play, draw up the sets for it. They must be able to act a story or a poem, arrange the stage for a scene, or arrange a simple play in several scenes, and act episodes in their school and home life. They are also expected to make alterations and cuttings in an

existing play. They must have acquired the technique of speech and movement.

In the secondary schools the dramatic work in the circles is equally related to class subjects, and is planned in conjunction with the subject teachers. The work is still to be concentrated on the preparation of a play rather than on the results. Not more than three or four plays are produced in a year. Sketches, charades, living newspapers, and other forms of dramatic art are included in the work. Here the pupils give their performance to the school, or the factory, or collective farm attached to it. The performances are generally connected with some celebration. In order to study the plays, particularly the classics, literary evenings are arranged, with readings, and a talk by the author where possible.

Stress is laid on the point that the dramatic work forms an integral part of the syllabus for the school year. Therefore, when a concert or a play is required for a school celebration, it does not upset the school's normal régime. Every class selects that which it considers suitable from its repertoire. All the pupils of the secondary schools elect a committee from all the classes to be in charge of celebrations. Music and art are always used to help the dramatic work.

The pupils at this stage are expected to know what is meant by the construction of a play, by the idea of the play, the theme and material on which it develops, the dramatic plot and its development, the line of developing action. They must be able to dissect a play into all its elements. They must be able to explain the difference between a purely narrative and dramatic production. They are expected to be able to write a play on a given theme; find a subject, collect material, prepare a scheme, and give character to the parts. The pupils should also know how to arrange a school concert, a few items for the long interval, or a concert for the factory or collective farm to which the school is attached. The production of every play, sketch, or dramatised story requires drawings, models, costumes, and posters.

I have deliberately given considerable space to the arts subjects in order to correct the wrong impression of Soviet education as something wholly utilitarian, created by the Soviet emphasis on industry.

*Mathematics.* Because there are still a great many children who go to school for the first time at the age of seven or eight, the arithmetic syllabus is more elementary than one would have expected. In the primary school (eight to twelve) the syllabus includes a knowledge of the four rules with whole numbers of any value, the metric system (linear, square, and cubic measure), elementary decimal and ordinary fractions, elementary knowledge of geometry, linking it up with manual work, problems with whole numbers and fractions, drawing to scale, use of field compasses, simple area sums. Every lesson which deals with something new must include practical work. It should also make an emotional appeal to the pupils.

Class 5 takes, in arithmetic, vulgar and decimal fractions, understanding of numbers, proportion and percentages; in geometry, elementary knowledge of geometrical bodies and lines.

The mathematics syllabus now proceeds by simple stages. On the whole I found the standard lower than in our country. It is impossible in a general book to give the entire syllabus for all subjects. I am selecting what is typical and what is illustrative of Soviet principles. According to the preface to the mathematics syllabus, "The study of mathematics must be so planned that numbers and measures are weapons in the hands of the children for the conquest of knowledge and of the activity surrounding them, for the comprehension of the work of Socialist construction; it must be a means for the better participation in the social life, and for preparation for the defence of the country."

*Native Language.* "A knowledge of his native language should make the pupil discover books as one of the most important

sources of his cultural growth, and enable him to express his thoughts correctly, both verbally and in writing, and to understand the thoughts of others." The aim is to develop in the children an artistic, clear, and emotionally rich speech. The work takes various forms: poetry, songs, reading aloud; creative, free, and descriptive games connected with class reading; talks and excursions, story-telling by the children; acting poetry, fables, stories; individual and collective presentation of short scenes based on incidents in school life and work, on themes supplied by the teacher or the pupils themselves. Art work is an important tool in language teaching. It is used to illustrate stories and poems, and to help the pupils to understand book illustration generally. The year's syllabus is divided into the following sections: reading, writing, development of language, grammar, and spelling. A suggested division of the time for the whole year is as follows:

|                         | Class 1  | Class 2  | Classes<br>3 and 4 |
|-------------------------|----------|----------|--------------------|
| Reading.....            | 80 hours | 80 hours | 60 hours           |
| Writing.....            | 60 „     | 40 „     | 20 „               |
| Language development .. | 50 „     | 60 „     | 60 „               |
| Grammar .....           | 50 „     | 60 „     | 60 „               |

The syllabus for Class 1 (eight years) consists of learning to read and write and language development. Class 2 perfects reading and writing and speaking, and begins silent reading. In grammar the pupils must arrive by purely practical means at an understanding of the composition of speech, learning nouns, adjectives, and verbs. The syllabus for Classes 3 and 4 gives much time to grammar and spelling. Class 5 has grammar, spelling, and punctuation, work with books and newspapers, and spoken and written language. The remaining classes continue work on these sections.

*Literature.* The syllabus in Class 5 is introductory to further study; to give the pupils information about literature, to help

them to understand correctly (from a class point of view) literary work, and to develop interest in independent reading. The syllabus begins with modern authors because they contain material which touches the pupils' lives very closely. This is followed by writers of the past—Pushkin, Turgenev, Nekrassov, etc. "The teacher must approach these works from Lenin's direction on the importance of the cultural heritage of humanity, bringing out the progressive aspects as well as the class limitations." Folk-lore is also included in the syllabus. Some theoretical literary problems are taken, as, for example: "Literature is the weapon of class-conscious activity and class education of man"; "The realisation of the value of the literary heritage, and the reason for its study"; "The technique of writing." Folk-lore includes riddles, proverbs, and sayings.

Class 6 takes theoretical and technical problems, Russian authors—Pushkin, Lermontov, Gogol, etc.—and also Heine.

Class 7 has to complete the syllabus dealing with nineteenth- and twentieth-century Russian literature, to study the problem of the development of modern Soviet literature, the significance of literature, modern and classical, in the struggle for the construction of a Socialist society; Russian literature of industrial capitalism and Imperialism; literature of the period of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

Class 8. The general work is as in Class 7, but the teacher must add to it a picture of the historical-literary process as a whole in order to bring out the artistically conscious and educative value of literature. Russian literature deals with the process of feudalisation and "enlightened absolutism." In feudal literature is included folk-lore. Western European literature includes Shakespeare, Molière, Beaumarchais. In Class 8 begins the study of the national literatures of the U.S.S.R., the history of literature, and continues the study of theoretical and technical problems and literary criticism.

Class 9 studies Russian literature of the modern industrialist-capitalist period, including critical works; petit bourgeois literature of the period of the breaking up of feudalism; petit

bourgeois literature of the period of political reaction. Western literature includes Balzac and Zola.

Class 10 studies literature of the twentieth century up to the Revolution: literature of bourgeoisie and landlordism, proletarian literature, literature of the petit bourgeois of the period of revolt, of the reconstruction period.

Western European literature takes Shakespeare's *Othello* as illustrating the decline of feudalism, and the new bourgeois outlook; Byron the poet of the period following the Industrial Revolution in England; Goethe, ideologue of the historically progressive bourgeoisie developing in an economically and socially backward country. Finally there is a lecture and discussion and a general review regarding Western European literature, noting Boccaccio, Petrarch, Erasmus, Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, and Schiller.

*Nature Study.* The problems of nature study in the primary school are given as follows: “(1) Using the basis of the knowledge which the pupils have of living nature, of natural phenomena; by making the knowledge more exact, by fighting against the perversion of this knowledge by religion and parish-pump mentality; to widen the outlook of the pupils with knowledge of new facts about organic and inorganic nature. (2) To give the pupils the simplest laws of the development of nature in a form easy for them to assimilate, and based on concrete material. (3) To show a clear picture of the power over the unknown forces of nature used in Socialist construction. (4) To awaken in the children an interest in the study of nature, and to equip them with an elementary knowledge of research in natural phenomena. Under such conditions nature study becomes a powerful weapon in the education of children as fighting rationalists, as future workers of a Socialist economy skilled in technics and science in the final rung of the educational ladder. It is impossible to talk of the systematic study of this or that natural science in the primary school, but the first steps towards the acquisition of the foundations of science are the most important in the teaching of

nature study. Therefore the approach to nature study must not be contemplative, expressing itself in worship of the ' beauty of nature ' or its ' secret force.' The fighting character of the work in nature study, the disclosure of facts which influence nature, the changing of nature in the interests of the workers—these are the characteristics of nature study work in the Soviet school."

To achieve this aim, the syllabus includes a picture of the construction of industrial giants, and questions on the reconstruction of agricultural economy. In rural districts the practical work is socially useful and connected with agriculture, but basically educational. Teachers are warned that the children must not be used to supply farm labour. " The work must be carried out in such a way that it shall help to extend and strengthen their knowledge of the fundamentals of science, that it shall help their Communist education and equip them with the ability to apply their theory to practice in experimental work."

Class 1 takes seasonal changes in nature, weather, animals and plants; wild ancestors of domestic animals; observation by all the children must form the basis of this work.

Class 2, nature groups; orchards, parks, woods, rivers, etc. Observation is essential.

Class 3, inorganic nature, soil and its minerals, water, air, etc.

Class 4, life of plants, of animals, life and structure of the human body (connected with hygiene).

Each theme has two excursions. The methods include individual work in the laboratory, demonstration by the teacher, work on the school plot of ground, continuous observation, the use of slides, and the cinema. A nature corner is arranged in every room. Some of these nature corners I have seen are complete miniature museums, with organic and inorganic specimens. The nature study circle elects one or two prefects to be in charge of the nature corner. Those in charge of observations have to write them up in a book that hangs on the wall for that purpose. In the secondary schools, more experimental work is done in the



laboratory by the children. Much use is made of drawing and painting, nature study lessons being related to art lessons.

In the secondary schools, nature study is divided up into the various sciences. Chemistry as a separate subject begins in Class 6, botany in Class 5, zoology in the second half of the year in Class 6, human anatomy and physiology in Class 8, biology in Class 5. The fundamentals of the theory of evolution are taken in Class 9. This includes Darwinism; the fundamentals of genetics and selection, the origin of man, the origin of life on earth. Mineralogy and geology are taken in Class 10.

*Geography* as a separate subject begins in Class 8. The syllabuses for Classes 8 and 4 include map-reading, elementary regional study, elementary physical geography, the chief physical features of the U.S.S.R., the most important facts relating to the culture of the various nationalities of the U.S.S.R., elementary knowledge of the geography of capitalist countries.

Class 5 revises direction finding, measuring earth's surface, shape and movement of earth, structure of earth, earth's zones and man.

Class 6, physical geography of Europe, Asia, Africa, America, and Australia.

Class 7, physical geography of Soviet regions.

Class 8, economic geography, general features of the national economy of the U.S.S.R., industry and energetics, agriculture, transport, achievements of the First Five-Year Plan, and perspective of the Second Five-Year Plan.

Class 9, economic geography of capitalist countries.

The pupils are expected to know how to compare the most important features, to compare geographic conditions and economic factors of different countries, and to draw their own conclusions.

Statistics and indices must be avoided.

England, Germany, U.S.A., China and Japan are to be studied in detail.

Activity is made use of in the teaching of geography. Whenever

possible the work is illustrated. Excursions to the factory, museum, etc., slides, the cinema, are all used.

*History* must include "the chief events and facts in their chronological order, with the characteristics of historical personages" (from the decree on the teaching of history and geography published in May 1934). It is admitted that until 1934 history had been taught badly. Great efforts were being made while I was there to improve history teaching and textbooks. As a separate subject history begins in Class 5. The syllabus takes ancient history, beginning with primitive man, and includes Greece.

Class 6, Roman history up to the Crusades.

Class 7, history of the Middle Ages up to, and including, the English Revolution.

Class 8, the Industrial Revolution, the French Revolution. In Classes 8 and 9 the courses in modern history and in the history of the U.S.S.R. are continued on the basis of previous work. The courses are taken separately.

In the teaching of history, excursions, art and drama, the cinema and slides play a very important part. All history is given the economic interpretation. Events are explained as being influenced by, or resulting from, methods of labour and production. The struggle for power by different groups is emphasised.

*Social Science.* There have been far-reaching changes in the teaching of social science, the aim being to eliminate the narrow, prejudiced outlook, the very marked political propaganda which would on occasion gloss over inaccuracies of fact when they did not fit in with theory. The efforts to a more tolerant, wider, and less biased outlook were generally evident. The following syllabus, issued in 1935 for primary schools, is only a projected one. The Primary and Secondary School Department of Narkompros<sup>1</sup> prefaces the syllabus thus: "Having regard to the absolutely correct criticisms received from teachers on the

<sup>1</sup> Commissariat of Education.

social science syllabus published earlier (for the half-year 1984-85), in publishing this tentative syllabus the Department of Primary and Secondary Schools of Narkompros begs all teachers, all workers in pedagogical institutes, and all methods instructors of education departments, to send in immediately their suggestions about the syllabus published below." I give the syllabus here, though it may be amended in some respects and though social science is now (January 1986) not taken until the fifth year, because it will form the basis of the syllabus adopted for the classes in which it is taught.

*Class 3 (42 lessons)*

1. *Why the Workers of the Soviet Country love their Fatherland* (lessons 1-12).

(a) Who ruled our country before the October Revolution? (2 lessons). There follows a description of conditions before the Revolution.

(b) To-day our country is ruled by the workers and peasants themselves (8 lessons). Follow details of how this was achieved.

(c) In our country a new, happy life for all the workers is being created (4 lessons). Follows information on new construction and agricultural developments. "Every year our peasants and workers become better off and more cultured. . . . The country of the Soviets is deeply loved by the workers of all the world. Our country is the fatherland of the workers of the world."

(d) The Soviet Government cares for children as no other Government in the world (8 lessons). Follows a comparison of child conditions before and after the Revolution, and of conditions in other countries.

2. *The Country of the Soviets needs Educated and Cultured People* (lessons 13-24).

(a) Tsarist Russia was a country of darkness and illiteracy (2 lessons).

(b) The U.S.S.R. a country of complete literacy (2 lessons).

(c) The Soviet pupil must learn well (2 lessons).

(d) The Soviet pupil must be disciplined and cultured (2 lessons). "Without conscious discipline there can be no worth-while learning. The good scholar does not miss lessons. He always fulfils his tasks accurately. The scholar must respect the work of the teacher. The teacher is fulfilling the most important duties delegated to him by the Soviet Government. He is bringing up Soviet youth. The work of the teacher is responsible and honourable. Among teachers are many heroes of labour, many notable people of the Soviets. . . . The pupil must help his comrade in his work. He must look after younger children. . . . Soviet children must be polite to grown-ups and to each other. They must know that unculturedness, rudeness, is a legacy of the past. Conscious and active builders of the new life must be cultured people. An example of a real comradeship and cultured attitude to people is given us by Lenin and Stalin."

(e) The Soviet scholar is the enemy of hooliganism (2 lessons). Follow more virtues which the Soviet scholar is expected to attain.

(f) The Soviet scholar must defend social property (2 lessons). Follow instances of children who have uncovered attempts at destruction of property in State and collective farms, and advice as to how this work of defence may be continued.

### *3. The Country of the Soviets needs Healthy, Courageous and Cheerful People* (lessons 25-38).

(a) In the country of the Soviets there are many daring and courageous people (7 lessons). Follows a list of such people and their activities.

(b) The Soviet Government shows the greatest concern for the country's citizens (7 lessons).

Revision, lessons 39-42.

### *Class 4 (42 lessons)*

#### *1. Prepare for the Defence of your Country* (lessons 1-18).

(a) The Red Army—the army of the workers and peasants. (4 lessons). Follows information on the Red Army.

(b) The U.S.S.R. the only country in the world where a happy life is being created for *all the workers* (6 lessons). Follow comparisons of conditions of workers in U.S.S.R. and in capitalist countries. Unemployment cannot exist in U.S.S.R. Planned economy. New construction.

(c) Our fatherland—the fatherland of the workers of all the world (2 lessons).

(d) The capitalists hate the country of the Soviets and are preparing to attack it (2 lessons).

(e) We do not want war, but are preparing to defend our fatherland (4 lessons).

2. *The Workers of the Soviets—the Brothers of the Workers of all Nations* (lessons 19–27).

(a) The business of the capitalists is the same all over the world (2 lessons).

(b) The October Revolution made an end of the oppression of nations in the U.S.S.R. (3 lessons).

(c) The workers' motto, "Workers of the world unite" (2 lessons).

(d) The children of the Soviet country—brothers to the children of the workers of all nations (2 lessons).

3. *Three Generations of Fighters for the Worker Class* (lessons 28–38).

(a) The Communist Party—the best and most advanced section of the worker class (4 lessons).

(b) The Communist Union of Youth (Komsomol)—the truest helper of the Leninist party (4 lessons).

(c) Pioneers—the relief and helper of the Komsomol (3 lessons).  
Revision, lessons 39–42.

Now let me describe in detail one school, typical of the better kind, in which I spent a day.

#### THE TWENTIETH TEN-YEAR SCHOOL IN KHARKOV

This school is situated in a workers' suburb where there are many factories. Most of the children's parents, however, are

railway workers. The building is large and the rooms are all spacious. It has a fine hall for assemblies, fitted with a stage, as well as wide corridors in which groups of children can play. The hall contained gymnastic apparatus, and, like the corridors, is attractively decorated by the pupils. There is also a separate dining-hall, a library, a doctor's room, and a staff room, chemistry, physics and biology laboratories. There are shower baths for the children, and a hairdresser attends the school regularly. An open-air rest-room helps to solve the problem of the children whose health is below normal, or who are very highly strung or nervy and yet are sufficiently active to require the daily occupation of school. During intervals and after dinner the children come here to rest under the nurse's supervision. The school has its own sanatorium in the town, which takes fifty children for a month at a time. They sleep there, are under the doctor's care, receive special nourishment, but attend the school in the day as the other children do. It is hoped in this way to prevent future ill health, to improve the present health of the pupils, while at the same time giving them the opportunity of receiving normal education.

The Director, very earnest and enthusiastic, is twenty-nine years old, and looks little more than a student himself. It is a two-shift school—600 children in the first shift and 700 in the second. The Director is in charge of both shifts, and receives a double salary. He also teaches history, for which he receives extra pay. Besides the teaching staff he has five assistants, one for mass political work, two for studies—that is arranging syllabuses, time-tables, etc.—one for method, and one administrator, or, as we should call him, secretary. There are also a school dentist, doctor, and nurse. The health workers are paid by the School Central Health Authority. A Pioneer Leader, helping with the non-academic side of school life, is also a member of the personnel, and is paid from school funds.

Every class has its responsible teacher. The maximum number of children in a class is forty. Should this number be exceeded owing to lack of accommodation elsewhere, the teacher receives

extra pay. In Classes 1 to 4 the teacher takes all subjects; in the rest, specialisation is the custom.

The school is attached to a factory near by, whose representatives enter into all its organisations. They take part in all meetings, discussions, measures, and campaigns, such as health campaigns, full attendance campaigns, etc. The factory sends the children to a sanatorium in the Crimea for part of the summer holidays. Parents, too, are active participants in their children's education. There is a Parents' Council which elects the Parents' Committee for regular monthly meetings to discuss school affairs. Much of the activity of the Parents' Council would in this country be regarded as gross interference by the staff. In the U.S.S.R. it is welcomed as friendly co-operation.

The Pupils' Committee shares with the teachers the responsibility for school discipline. The pupils elect brigades of monitors for such things as polytechnisation, for improving the condition in the school, for mass cultural work, for fighting against a low standard of work, for regularity and punctuality, for hygiene and cleanliness.

Circles for out-of-school activities are organised with the help of the pioneers and teachers. Some of the circles are led by pupils, others by teachers. In the latter case the teacher receives extra pay. There is a radio circle led by a boy, an aero-model circle of 70 children led by a girl. The choral circle has 150 children and appears the most popular. The physical culture circle comes second with 180 children; the string orchestra has 85 members; while the percussion band has 40. The agitational-propaganda circle which works in the holidays has 25 members. The literature circle, which reviews books and plays, reads and writes, has 50 children, four of whom, I was told, show great promise of becoming writers. There is an art circle with 80 members, a construction circle with 80, an electro-technical circle with 20, a chemistry circle with 80, a dramatic circle with 50, and a photographic circle with 50 members. There are several political circles, led partly by a teacher and partly by elder pupils, for the purpose of studying modern politics and events. Each circle

spends two hours a week on its activities. The school equipment and apparatus are used for circle work. The patron factory and the parents help with the material, and as a last resort it is bought at a reduced price. An interesting circle is the backward or slow children's circle. They are collected by the class teacher and helped by the abler pupils and the teacher.

The school possesses a horse, which appears to be used for draught and riding purposes.

During the intervals, play of all kinds is organised in the corridors. Chiefly it is singing and folk-dancing. Once a day an accordion player comes to the school and plays for the pupils while they dance in the long break. This, by the way, is a common feature not only of schools, but of all children's institutions. The accordion player is paid by the school.

Dinner is supplied in the school; 400 pupils receive free meals, others pay a little. A few prefer to have their dinner at home. I dined with the children—after a whispered question by the Director to the Voks representative, who happened to be with me, as to whether I was the sort of person who could be admitted to the intimate life of the school. We had a very good vegetable soup, *borsch*, which the Ukrainians make better than anyone in the U.S.S.R., meat and millet, but no vegetables, a fruit tart, and tea. I missed the vegetables, otherwise the meal was amply sufficient.

During the holidays the pupils can go to the children's theatre and cinema at reduced prices.

Polytechnised labour is carried on for pupils from thirteen to eighteen in specially equipped workshops. The primary school carries on this work in workrooms. Classes 5 and 6 (thirteen to fourteen years) obtain first-hand information about factory conditions, including the structure of different machines, through visits. Classes 7, 8, 9 and 10 work at benches in the factory for thirty-minute periods.

The workshops were very large, light, and airy, and well equipped. They include a smithy with an electric forge, a shop with drilling and milling machines, and a carpenter's shop, with



an electric plane and saw. The pupils make all kinds of articles, generally for school use; parts for machines, rakes, vice angles, etc. A very good steam engine has been made from material that is generally relegated to the dustbin; a food tin made the boiler. In the carpentry shop light wooden articles are made. The children elect a tools brigade which gives out and collects tools. At the end of the year an exhibition of work is held. The manual work does not have to pay for itself, nor do the pupils have to buy the articles they make unless they wish. This gives unlimited scope for manual activity.

I was present at two lessons. In the history lesson, Roman history was being taken. Most of the lesson was revision of the previous one. The pupils were asked such questions as to the kind of people who lived in Rome, their occupation, etc. The children answered, with the aid of a map, by putting up their hands. They did not appear to be very interested in the lesson, which was very tame and called forth no activity on the part of the children. In discussing the lesson with the teacher, she told me that it was one of a series; that in the previous lesson the pupils had made a map of the Roman Empire, and—possibly with justification—that it was difficult to make revision very interesting.

The mathematics lesson—geometry, where triangles were being taken—was a much better conducted lesson, by an obviously better teacher. In the first lesson the pupils had made triangles from paper and cardboard. This was the second lesson, and they were working out problems set by the teacher, which were discussed in class when finished. The class was very alert and interested, and the pupils asked for more and harder work.

Specialisation begins here in Class 7 (fourteen years). The decision is arrived at in consultation between pupil, parents, doctor, neurologist, and psychologist. No decision is irrevocable.

There are here, as in other schools, regular staff meetings for the discussion of school problems, methods, discipline, etc.

I asked about co-education. Had the Director or anyone experienced any difficulties? At first he replied in the negative,

and then he added, as though very much ashamed of the fact, that between fourteen and seventeen the pupils were inclined to flirt. He was much relieved when he found I regarded this as natural. He affirmed that it in no way hindered studies, and that the school had experienced nothing unpleasant or difficult as a result of co-education.

## CHAPTER XIII

### *Technical and Professional Education*

#### THE FACTORY APPRENTICE SCHOOL

A RECORD of the part played by the Komsomol (Young Communist League) in the cultural and economic reconstruction of the U.S.S.R. would fill volumes. It was the Komsomol that in practice created the factory apprentice school. Almost immediately after the Revolution the Komsomol realised that the Soviet's greatest need was skilled workers. How to train them? The mass of the young people had little schooling in the towns and less still in the villages. There were many conferences with educationists and others, and from these resulted the factory apprentice school in the industrial centres, and the school for peasant youth in rural areas. Every factory was to organise a department for the training of youth for industry; every rural education authority, and later every State or collective farm, was to organise a school for peasant youth. The course lasted three years, and half the time was spent in general education and half in training for industry. For the technical education the factory had to supply a suitable workshop with benches and machines corresponding to the students' physical development, as well as material and instructors.

In the schools of peasant youth the students were trained in agriculture, including the use and care of agricultural machinery. The factory apprentice schools began by taking pupils who had received a two years' primary education. As the number of seven-year schools increased and the majority of children were able to have a longer time at school, so the qualifying period for students applying for admission to the factory apprentice schools was lengthened.

The importance of the factory apprentice schools can hardly be overestimated. They trained skilled workers, teaching them the scientific handling of tools; they trained their muscles so

that a minimum of energy was expended with the maximum result. Remedial exercises were given every hour. They were taught the structure and handling of machines, and how to read blue-prints. The general education helped to train intelligent workers who had general knowledge of the sciences which formed the basis of their industry. They also studied Russian language and literature. Physical culture is compulsory in all educational institutions. In their leisure the students worked in the innumerable circles which are part of every Soviet institution. They learnt to express themselves in art, music, drama, and dancing. The factory apprentice schools spread very rapidly. Before the Revolution they were non-existent. By 1923 there were 50,000 pupils in the schools. In 1929 the number grew to 168,000. In 1932 there were 1,177,000 pupils, in 8,000 schools. Their contribution to the fulfilment of the First Five-Year Plan was 450,000 workers.

The very complete education given in the factory apprentice schools had in time an unexpected result. Numbers of pupils became so interested in academic learning, which had been made possible to them for the first time, that on completing the course they entered higher education institutes instead of going into the factory. It looked as though the purpose for which the factory apprentice schools were created might be defeated. The Government considered the situation serious, and in 1933 issued a decree reorganising the factory apprentice schools in harmony with the developments in the country.

The rapid spread of seven-year schools played an important part in their decision. All children in industrial centres were by then receiving a seven years' education. There was therefore no need for the factory apprentice schools to give so much time to general education. The need for skilled workers was still urgent. The Government therefore fixed the period of training in the factory apprentice schools from six months to one year. The major share of the time, five to six hours a day, was given to training for industry, while academic education was given two to three hours a day.

It is not to be imagined that these factory-workers will be deprived of higher education if they can profit by it. There are numerous avenues with which I have dealt in another chapter, along which the factory-worker can travel to a university or institute, but he must complete three years in a factory first. When production has made sufficient progress to allow of the ten-year schools to become general, vocational training will not begin till eighteen. At present, for the majority of children it begins at fifteen. Every year this majority decreases.

The factory apprentice schools are under the control of the Commissariats of Industry. Each industry or trust is responsible for those schools that train its workers.

Besides the factory apprentice schools there are, increasing in number, what is known as the "Industrial or Agricultural Educational Combinats." These are education departments of an industrial or agricultural enterprise. They frequently have several sections. This is particularly the case with agricultural combinats, which often have a school for peasant youth, an institute for agricultural industry, economics, and agronomy, a research department, and an experimental station.

The educational combinat at the Moscow Ball-Bearing Factory is typical of many industrial ones. It was particularly interesting to me, as I first visited it in 1982 in early spring, when it was a factory apprentice school, and when all around the factory were fields of mud. In 1984 there had grown up around it almost a whole town.

The combinat has a two-year course for girls and boys who have finished the seven-year school. The practical work includes turnery, milling, locksmith's work, and the assembling of complicated machines. The theoretical work includes the technology of materials, physics, chemistry, etc. Two and a half hours a day are given to practical work and three hours to theoretical work. In the first year, the practical work is carried out in special workshops; in the second year, in the factory, under factory conditions. Tuition is free, and pupils receive a grant of thirty-three roubles a month for the first three months, forty-eight

roubles for the next three months, rising up to sixty-eight roubles a month. The combinat has a hostel for those unable to live at home, for which no rent is charged. The students attend the cinema and theatre free. The combinat has its own *loge* in the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow. There are all kinds of clubs, which are run entirely by the students.

The combinat runs a technicum, and various courses for the improvement of the technical and general education of the adult factory-workers.

#### TECHNICUMS

Whereas the factory apprentices schools train elementary-grade workers, the technicums give intermediate technical and professional training. They take students who have completed the seven-year school and give them a four-year course which includes both general education and specialised training. All students must take Russian language and literature, one foreign language, political economy, dialectical materialism and science. The latter includes mathematics, physics, chemistry, and biology. Finally comes the group of specialised subjects which depends on the work for which the student is training. Every student must spend up to 80 or 40 per cent of the time for the whole course on practical work. The place where this is carried out will depend on the course of study. The technicums that are training foremen for factories will send their students to the factory for their practical work. The transport technicums will send them to transport enterprises and to the railway, river, or sea. The pedagogical technicums, which train teachers for the pre-school institutions and the primary schools, will send their students to schools and nursery-infant schools. The technicums which train office managers, accountants, etc., will send their students either to administrative organisations or to the administrative departments of industrial enterprises.

Here, as in the schools, the theoretical and practical work is closely related. An educationist supervises the practical work, while the actual instruction is given by a specialist. The methods

employed in the technicums are mixed. In the first two years they are the same as those used in the schools. The foundation is the class lesson. With this is used laboratory work, independent study, discussion, and excursions. The methods used in the last two years approximate to those used in the institutes or universities. The lesson gives place to the lecture. This is followed by group work and discussion. More time is now given to independent work. Every student must receive a diploma before applying as a qualified worker for the post for which he has trained. The diploma is given on the successful presentation of a thesis. This has to be publicly defended at a meeting of students and staff. The student has three months for its preparation. Those students who wish to qualify for higher positions may take the entrance examination to an institute or university and are admitted under the usual conditions.

What are the factors which decide the student as to which technicum he shall enter? First comes the environmental factor. Students who live in a district where, for example, the textile industry predominates will naturally be influenced in that direction, just as in a mining area in England most of the young people are first of all inclined to enter the mining industry. The second factor is the wishes of the girl or boy, based on his aptitudes. A student may live in a textile area and show musical or literary gifts. He will enter a music technicum or an institute. Or he may wish to be a teacher, then he will enter a pedagogical technicum. Before a final decision is taken, psychological and industrial tests are applied. As yet the number of psychologists for testing students is far from adequate, and work is being carried on with methods of testing.

There is one other factor which influences the choice of a technicum, it is the very important one of the economic and social needs of the country. At the time when factory-workers were needed more than any other kind of worker, as a result of propaganda the factory-worker was considered the highest type of citizen, with the consequence that all the youth flocked to the factories. An unforeseen result of this was a shortage of teachers.

To counteract this, conditions in the teaching profession were improved, salaries were increased, the status of the teacher was raised to that of the factory-worker and so on. Propaganda stressing the importance of the teaching profession, and of education, was carried on in the Press and on the wireless. Much was made of the great work that the teacher was doing in the building of Socialism. Gradually youth reacted and began to enter teachers' technicums. Should it happen that more engineers are required in a certain year, and fewer textile workers, then the number of vacant places in the latter technicums will be reduced, while the number in the engineering technicums will be increased. When the economic plans are drawn up for any period, the number of new workers for each industry or social unit is also planned. By this means it is possible to regulate roughly the number of students entering different types of technicums and so prevent a dislocation of industry or of social life. When the country's need for skilled workers is satisfied—this will not be for a great many years—the control exercised by planning will prevent overcrowding in one profession and a shortage in another.

One interesting feature about these students who are to be the lower-grade specialists of the Soviet Union should be mentioned. Year by year the origin of the students changes. Whereas in the beginning the majority came from the petit bourgeois—traders, merchants, and officials—now the majority come from factory-workers and peasants. Actually 75 per cent of the new lower-grade specialists are of worker or peasant origin.

The number of students trained each year increases rapidly. In 1928 there were 1,650 technicums, with 253,600 students. In 1982 there were 8,000 technicums, with about one million students.



## CHAPTER XIV

### *Higher Education*

FROM the academic point of view, higher education in pre-revolutionary Russia was on a level comparable with that in any country. It produced scholars and scientists of world renown. Even in those days, men and a few women went there to study, not because it was the correct thing for one's class to do. The freedom and possibilities for study were, however, hedged about with such social and political restrictions as would never have been tolerated in England, for example. I have given details of these restrictions, and of the political persecution, in an earlier chapter. The effect of this autocratic attitude on the part of the authorities was to arouse the spirit of revolt rather than to banish it. The universities became hotbeds of revolutionary activities. The political-mindedness and activities of the Soviet students are in a direct line of tradition. The type of student, however, has completely changed. Whereas before the Revolution the percentage of workers or peasants was extremely low, now one is told with great pride the percentage has risen to seventy-five, and in some institutes to ninety. I remember being completely taken aback momentarily in one institute, when almost the first words the Director said to me were, "The social status of our students has greatly improved." The question-mark into which my face so obviously resolved itself made him add quickly, "When we began here the percentage of students of worker and peasant origin was twenty-eight, and now [in 1984] it is seventy-eight." It is an attitude a little disconcerting to one coming from a country in which class plays such an important part in an exactly reverse direction.

With the change of student has come a change in the reason for going to the university. There is only one reason, to train for a profession. General education finishes at eighteen. All higher

education is then training in some branch of arts, science, administration, etc. It is not a money privilege. There are adequate facilities for pursuing general culture, for those who do not go to the university as well as for those who do.

There are no universities which are regarded as finishing schools for the sons and daughters of the rich. The purpose of the university in the U.S.S.R. is to train worker leaders of the worker class, with an emphasis on worker. This emphasis, however, does not exclude culture. There are institutes for music, art, drama, and dancing. So great is the demand for arts-workers of all kinds that many students are accepted in the institutes whose abilities in no way justify their training. Philosophy is studied at the Communist Academy. There are probably more research institutes at the present time in the U.S.S.R. than in any other country. If a man can show that he has an idea which might be useful to the country—and it is by no means difficult to convince the authorities of this—he will be given workers, an institute, equipment, and apparatus, and will be told to proceed. Nor are results expected immediately. He will have sufficient time for his experiments and research.

As the Soviet university is a place to which people come to work, there is a new atmosphere about it very different from that which one meets in other countries. There is a seriousness, an eagerness, a purposiveness, and an awareness about the students that is very striking. They have absolute faith in the future, in their own ability to "remould the world nearer to the heart's desire," in their case a Communist desire. It is an exhilarating experience to spend some time with the student youth of Soviet Russia. On first going into a university, one still receives rather the impression of a factory. The men and women are still poorly dressed by our standards.<sup>1</sup> There is no feeling of spaciousness and little of leisure. There is an absence of the amenities and graciousness which we associate particularly with our older universities. The hostels are as unlike the students' quarters in our universities as they could well be. None of this

<sup>1</sup> This is improving rapidly—January 1986.

is surprising, the demand for higher education has increased so much since the Revolution. The country's resources, though so large potentially, are still very small when compared with the needs of the whole population. When financial allocations are made, higher education cannot be given a disproportionate share. That the aim is to give the best possible to higher education is obvious from the yearly improvements. It is only a matter of time for the raising of the standard of students' needs and demands, and for the production of the necessary means for the satisfaction of these demands. I noticed in 1984 many serious attempts at beautifying rooms and common rooms. In the Academy of Communist Education the hostel committee of management offers prizes for the best-kept rooms. All the rooms I visited were clean and neat. They all had some flowers, although it was early spring and flowers were difficult to get. Rooms are shared by two or three students. That again is a temporary necessity. There are separate quarters for married students. Russians marry young, as there are no economic obstacles to this. Every student, man or woman, has a post waiting, even before completion of the course. In fact, so great is the demand for specialists that, in some art institutes, students leave before they are qualified. Propinquity and community of intellectual and social interests, plus sex attraction, result in many student marriages. Many students enter the university after marriage. About 80 percent of the students receive a stipend sufficient to enable them to live while studying. There is therefore no hindrance whatever to this natural desire for marriage. Nor are married students expected to refrain from having children if they desire them.

In the students' quarters are crèches and nursery-infant schools for their children and for those of the students who were parents when they entered the university. It is very usual for married young people to go to a university either together or separately. As, contrary to the generally accepted belief, Soviet authorities are opposed to the breaking up of families, and Russians will rarely leave their children for any length of time,

the arrangements are such that married students can pursue their studies and still see their children in their leisure time. In most cases the child sleeps with the parents. Student parents receive an extra grant for their children. The crèche and nursery-infant school and all medical services are free. The woman student who is going to have a baby has two months off before pregnancy and two months off after. She will generally spend this time in one of the special students' homes, of which there is a growing number. By the end of the time she is fit to resume her studies.

There are other services at the disposal of students. There are dining-rooms where food, though monotonous and plain, is plentiful and cheap. There are no heavy fees required to join the libraries or innumerable clubs, either to pay for their heavy expenses or to keep them select. All medical service is free for students, too. Cheap seats in the theatres and cheap travel facilities for holidays are other services to which students are entitled.

One is frequently asked about discipline in the universities. The problem hardly exists. As I have said before, students come there to work. Those who have made a mistake, and imagined they would have "a good time" in the university, are sent back to the job from which they came, or, if straight from the technicum, are told that they had better find some other work for a time, until they are ready to benefit from higher education. Discipline is entirely in the hands of the students. There are no rules regulating the time by which a student must be in, or whether a woman student may take tea or dinner with a member of the opposite sex in his rooms, or vice versa. The students were incredulous that such rules exist in English universities. Amusements such as painting the town red on any and every occasion, smashing lamp-posts, or knocking off policemen's helmets simply do not appeal to Soviet students. They regard them as suitable antics for ten- or twelve-year-olds. As for the spectacle of a grown man chasing adult students round the town for some childish offence, it is simply incomprehensible to them. Their

sense of humour and fun expresses itself differently. In the wall-newspaper they rag each other, as well as the staff and administration, unmercifully with pen and pencil. It is sometimes a highly literary and artistic production in which the foibles and shortcomings of all are mercilessly exposed.

Another outlet for their humour is provided by what are called *chastoushki*. They are topical skits, usually made up on the spur of the moment, on anyone and anything that is connected with the university. Two or four lines are sung by one student, while the refrain is sung by the whole group, usually accompanied by the clapping of hands and tapping of feet. Often there is a balalaika or mandolin accompaniment. The soloist changes frequently, so that anyone can pay off a score in this jolly, friendly way. Some of the *chastoushki* I have heard have been excruciatingly funny and cruelly telling. The *camaraderie* that exists between students and staff makes this mutual criticism possible and acceptable. "Comrade" is not a meaningless term in the university. It is the form of address used by everybody to everybody, regardless of their position. The Communist enthusiasm which particularly pervades the universities, the staff as well as the students; the fact that the authorities and the students are working to realise the same goal; the absence of childish restrictions on the freedom of the students—all combine to prevent that unconscious, if not conscious, hostility that is generally found between one generation and another, and help to solve the problem of discipline.

The possibilities which early marriage offers to the Soviet student for the satisfaction of his sex instincts, the totally different outlook of Communists on the question of sex, have caused sex immorality to disappear entirely from student life. Indeed, an almost puritanical reaction has set in against the laxity and excesses of the early days of the Revolution. The opinion now is "that it is bourgeois to marry, cease to love your partner after a short time, and go off with someone else." And marriage means children. The serious student regards abortion as gravely anti-social. No student feels that life has no need of

him or place for him. He is very much wanted. He is given every opportunity of putting his Communist ideals into practice. He does not need sex as an outlet for all his unsatisfied desires, for all his pent-up discontents. He has no unsatisfied desires in this sense, nor discontents. He has the whole of life in which to experience living. Therefore sex plays an infinitely smaller part with Soviet youth than with any other youth. His environment makes for an integrated personality singularly free from the torments and obsessions of sex.

The Soviet student does not yet enjoy much leisure. The need for trained and qualified specialists is still so urgent that he is expected to give much more time to study than is regarded as good. When the social duties are included it is found that Soviet students often work fourteen to sixteen hours a day. This is partly due to the fact that they, in common with Russians generally, do not yet know how to work. The lack of privacy, owing to shortage of accommodation, means that the students must spend their leisure collectively. This, by the way, is no hardship to Russians, who are very gregarious. They do like living collectively. There are innumerable societies which cater for their leisure. Orchestras and dramatic societies are universal, as are physical culture and sport circles. Any kind of leisure activity can be organised if the students wish. In some universities this leisure is highly organised and serious efforts are made to improve the students culturally. Others prefer to leave the students free to improve themselves as they feel the need. The Bounov Institute of Pedagogy, in Moscow, belongs to the former category, while the Academy of Communist Education, now removed to Leningrad, belongs to the latter. While visiting the Academy of Communist Education, I picked up a university news-sheet belonging to the Bounov Institute. The Director told me it was not the academy's paper and tried to convey the impression that it was not worth reading. Whereupon I promptly read it. It appeared that the Bounov Institute considered that culture should be administered frequently and regularly, in an organised form. It trounced very severely the Academy of Communist

Education for not making culture compulsory. The latter believed that the students should have freedom to use their leisure as they pleased, that compulsory doses of culture were hardly likely to achieve the sort of cultured society which Lenin visualised.

On many other topics there is considerable difference of opinion between various institutes, differences expressed with the frankness and sometimes brutality of youth. Here, too, I realised what utter nonsense is the view so sedulously cultivated abroad that everyone receives his opinions ready-made from the Communist Party, and dare not express his own thoughts. The students I met were well informed about political events in the world outside. They studied capitalist history, economics, and politics, past and present. Naturally the bias was Communist, and the explanations offered by the lecturer or professor were Marxist. I came across no instance where this explanation was questioned. How could it be in the circumstances? These students knew that in the capitalist world there were millions unemployed; in the capitalist world their *confrères* were losing hope and courage because the world had no need of them; in the capitalist world the class from which they came, the poor peasant and worker, was the exploited class. Is it surprising that capitalism and religion—which they believe supports it—seem to them utterly outworn creeds, which, if nothing worse, are preventing the liberation of mankind? Is it surprising that Marxism, which is making possible for the first time in history the free and full development of all the people of their country, should seem to them an infallible truth?

The students still take an active part in the social and political life outside. In fact, there is no outside. The expression "Town and Gown" would be meaningless in the U.S.S.R. The university is never placed in juxtaposition to the town outside it. Political life outside the university is very much the affair of the students. At the age of eighteen, Russians receive the vote. Therefore soon after, and often before, the student enters the university he is politically and socially responsible. While there, he will probably

join the union of the profession for which he is studying. This makes him industrially responsible. Many of the students will join the Young Communist League, which not only makes them politically conscious, but enjoins on them a particular political responsibility. Thus the student in a Soviet university has all the responsibilities of an adult and is expected to behave accordingly. The Communist Party is particularly interested in higher education. Does not the industrialisation and the cultural development of the country depend on it? The decrees of 1932 which stabilised the changes that had been proceeding in Soviet university life, and which put forward very detailed regulations for its life and study, were signed by President Kalinin and Secretary of the Central Committee Enukidze. It is as though our Cabinet were to issue detailed laws regulating the organisation and methods of study in our universities, signed by the King and the leader of the party in office.

The 1932 decrees limited very greatly the calls that might be made upon students by outside organisations. The fact that students had to spend so much time in the earlier years in outside activities was partly responsible for the low academic level. There was nothing from which those students shrank, no call that they did not answer. The Government knew that in any emergency it could count upon them. When a Leningrad factory broke down, a thousand students gave up their free day to put it right and fulfil the schedule. They even on occasion undertook to help with the cleanliness of the streets in their district—no small undertaking when the peasants, utterly devoid of any acquaintance with hygiene, sanitation, or cleanliness, were pouring into the cities.

Youth still responds to an urgent call as it did to help with the construction of the first Moscow Underground. In the summer, when all hands are needed for the harvest, the students will give up a week or a month of their holiday to help the collective farm. In Kharkov when I was last there they were planting trees on their weekly holiday. I did my share, at the pressing invitation of a group. They all help with elections. They will address



workers and peasants on the duty of voting. They will help with the elimination of illiteracy. Unless a student is prepared to be considered an outsider he must take some part in the social life of the community. As a body the students take part in campaigns against inefficiency, slackness, drunkenness, and superstition, and for the improvement of social and economic conditions. They still live at high pressure, though the strain is not nearly so great as it was in 1932. For one thing, that nightmare of almost daily meetings of one kind or another has been abolished. When I visited, this time, the Academy of Communist Education, I expressed a wish to attend a students' meeting. The Director and his assistant laughed. Did I still believe there was always a meeting going on? Student meetings now took place about once a month.

Universities in our sense, as a conglomeration of colleges of one or many faculties, only exist in the U.S.S.R. in cities like Moscow, Leningrad, Kharkov, and one or two others. Their place is taken by the single-faculty institute, such as the institute of pedagogy, of biology, of hydrodynamics, of art, etc. In the early days, whenever a problem presented itself for solution, whether it was in industry, economics, or administration, an institute for it was organised. A group of people, not always the most suitable, were given what means were available and told to set to work. It resulted in a minute splitting up of subjects. The decree of 1932 which reorganised education generally called attention to this evil, which has in a measure been abolished.

Higher education has been considerably affected by the 1932 decrees. In the first instance the sphere of the student's responsibility was strictly limited to his work and his social life. He was in no way to interfere in the administration of the university or in the organisation of the academic work. That was henceforth to be wholly within the province of the director and his staff. No longer were the students' political and professional organisations to issue reports on professors and demand their dismissal. Their business was to help the Director and staff to fight for a higher standard of attainment, and to manage student

*affairs.* The economic, political, and cultural development of the last few years has made normal conditions possible. Communist and Communist-minded professors do not need to be watched by the students for left or right deviations or even anti-Soviet propaganda. A strong discipline, conscious, and self-imposed, which includes concentration on one's work, and high academic endeavour, is now demanded from the student.

As early as 1930, the institutes were removed from the control of the Commissariat of Education and placed under the control of the appropriate economic or industrial commissariat. The industrial trusts have each taken under their immediate control the institute which trains their specialists. The Commissariat of Education retains general methods direction, and is, of course, responsible for pedagogical institutes of all kinds. The trusts are generally responsible for their students' grants. These are given according to work done. Those achieving average standard receive 55 roubles a month, rising by 10 roubles yearly to the third year and then by 20 roubles to the fifth year. Those whose standard of work is high receive 65 roubles the first year, with the same rate of increase. In some cases the grants are given by the social or political organisation which sends the student to the institute. The trusts are also responsible for the conditions under which the students carry out their practical work, and for the amenities of the social life. The Committee for Higher Technical Education was formed, attached to the Central Executive Committee of the Government, consisting of academicians and professors who were responsible for the actual education, for syllabuses, time-tables, and methods of work. The president of the committee is Academician Krjijanovsky.

It appears that the commissariats were not very good foster-parents. A decree issued in 1933 complains that the directors of institutes are selected by third-rate people. Often the best directors are removed from an institute and transferred to an economic enterprise. The Central Committee of the Communist Party considers such an attitude incorrect, and one that causes

unnecessary and serious difficulties to the satisfactory running of the institutes. It regrets to see that the commissariats regard the control of higher educational institutions and higher technical institutes as of secondary importance. They are asked to give proper attention to the matter, particularly in the selection of Directors. The decree insists that the post of Director shall be held by the same person for a period of not less than from three to five years. The commissariats must further immediately concern themselves with the salaries of Directors, and with supplying them with necessities.

Sole responsibility for the academic, administrative, and economic life of the university or institute rests with the Director, who is appointed by the commissariat. He must see that the full complement of academic hours is occupied, that neither students nor lecturers are absent from, or late for, lectures, etc. He has to authorise professors, lecturers, and others to deal with students' slackness, or any behaviour which interferes with the institute's régime, by warnings, talks, and fines. When all these methods fail, he may resort to expulsion from the institute and exclusion from higher education for a period from one to five years. The Director of a Chair is appointed competitively by the commissariat from those who hold the title of professor. The teaching staff—lecturers, tutors, supervisors—is appointed by the Director of the institute on the recommendation of the Director of the Chair.

There is a strict time-table, which must be adhered to both by students and staff. All higher education institutions have now a six-day week; that is, five days' work and one day's holiday. An academic year consists of fifty academic weeks, including two weeks' holiday in winter. Students are to have eight weeks' holiday in the summer, but the staff two calendar months. The holidays vary with conditions. Where the practical work is seasonal, as building, agriculture, water transport, geological surveying, the first term may begin between September 1st and November 1st in agreement in each case with the Committee for Higher Technical Education and Narkompros on the

recommendation of the different commissariats. Similarly the winter holidays may be delayed. The working-day is to consist of six hours for the students. Pay for the staff is to be differentiated according to rank, and according to the number of years' experience. Institutes, like schools, still have to work in shifts in many cases. The decrees forbade any work, other than private study, after 10 p.m. or before 8.30 a.m.

All between the ages of seventeen and thirty-five, provided they are not deprived of civil rights,<sup>1</sup> are eligible for admission to the university. Admission is contingent on the passing of an entrance examination in native language, in literature, mathematics, physics, chemistry and social science based on the syllabus set by the Committee for Higher Technical Education. Those who are entering architectural or construction institutes must also pass in drawing. This examination must now be taken by everyone, irrespective of his previous education or the type of institute which he wishes to enter. It includes art institutes, film institutes, etc. The aspirant to future stardom in the film world must have a good general education, and a good knowledge of dialectical materialism, as well as ability to act. Of those passing the entrance examination, preference is given to workers or their children, kolkhozniks or their children, and others of the same category. Shock brigade workers, or their children, and the children of intellectual workers, must be accepted on passing the examination. Should a candidate pass the examination and not obtain a place in the institute, he has the right to apply for admission to another institute. Students whose application for admission is refused, or who are refused admission after passing the entrance examination, may send in complaints to the directorate of the sector for training specialists of the appropriate commissariat. Complaints are sent in through the Director of the institute that has made the refusal. The examinations are both oral and written, in language and mathematics, and oral in the other subjects. It is the business of the

<sup>1</sup> See footnote to pp. 84, 122.

institute and the commissariat to publish abroad in every likely place, as well as in the Press, particulars of entrance examinations. It is quite a common thing to see advertised in Moscow trams the fact that a certain institute is holding an entrance examination on a certain date.

The social science syllabus, to which the entrance examination is a preliminary, may interest readers, particularly when it is remembered that this subject must be taken by everyone, irrespective of their future profession. It is divided under:

1. *Political Economy*, which includes a study of Marx, Engels, Lenin.—Stalin on Communism—Socialism and the transition period—Lenin and Stalin on the dictatorship of the proletariat—Classes and class struggle in the dictatorship period—Study of Lenin and Stalin on the construction of Socialism in the U.S.S.R.—A critique of the views of counter-revolutionary Trotskyism and right opportunism on that question—Economic politics of the dictatorship of the proletariat of the year 1917–18—The state of military Communism— . . . Lenin's plan for electrification—Lenin's plan for co-operation—Periods—Restoration, reconstruction, building Socialism— . . . Capitalist and Socialist industrialisation—The advantages of the Soviet plan over the capitalist—Meaning of planning—Heavy machine industry as the material basis of Socialism— . . . The problem of catching up and outstripping the most advanced capitalist countries in the technical-economic respect—Fourteenth and Fifteenth Party Conferences on the ways of Socialist reconstruction of national economy— . . . Sixteenth Party Conference on the First Five-Year Plan—Result of First Five-Year Plan— . . . Stalin's Six Points— . . . Problems of the Second Five-Year Plan—Leading rôle of machine construction—Ferrous and non-ferrous metals—Problems of light industry and food industry in Second Five-Year Plan—Industrialisation as foundation of reconstruction of agriculture— . . . State farms and their significance in the reconstruction of agricultural economy—Machine tractor stations and their rôle in organising and directing collective farms— . . . Law

for protection of social property— . . . Completion of collectivisation—Problem of live stock—Realising Second Five-Year Plan—Obliterating divisions between industrial and agricultural regions, between town and country—Conditions of labour in U.S.S.R. and their principal difference from conditions in capitalist countries— . . . Socialist organisation of labour, Socialist competition, and shock brigades— . . . Stalin on Marxist meaning of equality as compared to petit bourgeois— . . . Improvement of transport—Questions of reorganisation— . . . Results of the struggle of the two systems, capitalist and Socialist—General capitalist crisis and immediate economic crises—Fall in production, and destruction of productive forces in capitalist countries—Growth of unemployment and impoverishment of working classes—Reduction of wages—Fascism—Destruction of capitalist system through proletarian revolution the only way out of the crisis. . . .

"2. *History of class struggle, the Bolshevik Party and Comintern.*—Class struggle as foundation of social development—Capitalism as a social economic period—Industrial Revolution in England—Great French Revolution of 1789— . . . Chartist movement— . . . February Revolution of 1848— . . . Imperial Revolution of Louis Bonaparte in 1851— . . . March Revolution of 1848 in Germany—Formation of First International— . . . Fundamental characteristic of capitalist development in Europe and U.S.A.— . . . General characteristics of pre-War imperialism— . . . Influence of October Revolution on world revolutionary movement.

"Decline of feudal economy and class struggle in Russia in first half of nineteenth century— . . . Revolution of 1905-07— . . . October Revolution— . . . Party conferences— . . . Question of nationalities at Sixteenth Party Congress— . . . Characteristics of present-day conditions of world capitalism—Failure of Social Democracy in Germany— . . . Workers' class in the U.S.S.R. and their party—The All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks as the front rank and shock brigade of world proletariat."

This syllabus, which I have given in some detail, covers the full course of three or five years. It has been considerably cut down from the syllabus of the previous year. Again I would emphasise that this is not a course for an economics degree. It is the knowledge that everyone who finishes a university or institute course is expected to have, whether his profession is to be medicine, music, ballet-dancing, engineering, or any other. The educated man who can say in a bored, superior tone, "I know nothing about politics," will simply not be considered in the U.S.S.R.

Every student will at the end of his course have a thorough knowledge of world and Soviet politics, and political history. Naturally it is from a Communist point of view, but students will at least understand events in their country, and their votes when given will be based on knowledge.

Russian language and literature includes a knowledge of grammar, phonetics, and morphology. Literature includes a knowledge of the chief works of classic and modern authors, both literary and scientific. The student must know the various literary theories, the authors and their inter-relationships, and ideology, themes, ideas, and points of view. Criticism of a writer and his work must be based on a knowledge of the social and political conditions of his time. Literature includes works of Fonvisin, Pushkin, Lermontov, Krilov, Turgenev, Nekrassov, Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy, Chekhov, Gorki, Shakespeare, Molière, Schiller, Goethe, Byron, etc.

Physical culture is included in the curriculum for higher education and is compulsory for all. Men and women receive instruction together. Whenever weather conditions permit, physical exercises are carried on out of doors. Instructors are being rapidly trained to supply the great demand of universities and institutes.

Practical work forms an integral part of a course at the university or institute. Beginning with the third year, between 30 and 40 per cent of the student's time must be spent in an enterprise or institution which is engaged in work similar to

that for which the student is training. If the student is taking a course in medicine, then his practical work will be done in a hospital which is connected with his institute. If he is training as a lecturer or teacher, his practical work will be done in the technicum or school attached to his institute. Similarly, if he is training in any branch of production, industrial or agricultural, his practical work will be done at a factory or farm connected with his institute. The student is paid for his work by the enterprise at the usual rates, and his work is taken into account in the production plans of the factory. The works management has to supply all the conditions for work, machines, benches, etc., and a highly qualified instructor. The university faculty is responsible for the educational control of the work. It draws up a plan, in connection with the works management, for the whole period of practical work. This plan must take into consideration the peculiar conditions of the industry or profession for which the student is being trained, and the peculiarities and characteristics of each group of students for whom the work is being arranged. A chart is drawn up of the movement of the students to different benches and departments. The practical work in the enterprise must include theoretical work which arises directly out of the students' immediate tasks. It is to include lectures, seminars, and discussion for the elucidation of difficulties and for the analysis of production processes. The syllabus of the course, which is arranged by the faculty, must show exactly at what stages the practical work occurs, and its connection with the theoretical work. The tutor or lecturer must be present in the workshop while the students are carrying out their production practice.

This is divided into three stages. The first stage trains the student as an ordinary worker, or lowest-grade technician. Here the purpose is not only to teach him the proper use of ordinary tools and instruments. He has to obtain a clear idea of all the ramifying interests connected with construction, with production processes, with the fulfilment of the industrial plan of an enterprise. He has to have acquired at the end of this stage some



skill in analysing production processes. In stage two the student works at more complicated benches or machines. During this period he has to acquire the organisational technical skill of a worker of middle or higher qualifications. He has to assist the foreman, the shift engineer, the office director, the departmental director, and the laboratory director, spending one month with each. Stage three is the pre-diploma stage. Here the student has to acquire administrative as well as technical ability. He should have, at the end of the time, all the practical knowledge and concrete material for his diploma work. He must be able to solve problems of Socialist construction.

Visits to works have to form part of production practice, but not more than 5 to 7 per cent of the whole time is to be spent on that. The diploma work must conclude the production practice. No student may receive a certificate of efficiency unless he has produced a satisfactory piece of diploma work. His thesis must, as usual, be publicly defended.

Production practice in an institution or enterprise must be preceded by preparatory practical work in the institute's workshop, laboratory, museum, etc. Here the student must gain an elementary knowledge of the processes used in institution, factory or farm. He must learn to handle the instruments and tools he will use in his production practice. The preparatory work must be planned so that it serves the scientific and theoretical work of the course, and not the industrial plan of the works where practice is carried out. The preparatory practical work begins in the second term and ends at the end of the fifth term.

The methods for the theoretical work have been laid down in detail. The chief emphasis is laid on individual responsibility and independent work. The laboratory brigade method, which was universal until 1982, has now been abolished. This was the method by which students divided themselves up into groups of four, five, or six, and worked collectively, so that a thesis presented was not the work of one individual, but of the whole group. It was found that this collective responsibility tended to lower the standard of work.

The introductory lecture to a course is given by the professor to all the students taking that course. In the course of the lecture he has to indicate sources of information and problems for further study. This lecture is followed by work in seminars of twenty to thirty students, with a lecturer who has to amplify in detail what the professor has touched on briefly. Discussion forms part of this work. The students then receive suggestions for individual study, which is carried on in the study cabinets, museums, laboratories, etc. Twice a year there are individual tests in three or four subjects. The Director of the Chair, who is ultimately responsible for the work of the students in his subject, has to keep records of the students' work. At the end of the course each student must again write a thesis, which he must publicly defend. Diplomas are given on the result of the thesis work. Degrees have now been instituted—one corresponding to our M.A., or M.Sc., the other to a doctorate—for independent research. After three years' practical work in an enterprise or institution for that work for which he has been trained, the student may return to the institute for research work or go to a research institute.

The number of institutes grow yearly, in spite of the fact that there have been a great many amalgamations. When industry or agriculture throws up a problem which cannot be solved in an existing institute, a new one is created. Inevitably, the work of some will reach a very high standard while in others the standard will be quite low. One of the best-run institutes is the Academy of Communist Education, moved from Moscow to Leningrad in 1935. It has undergone considerable reorganisation since its inception. When I first visited it in 1932 it had some thousand or more students, and its work was very diffuse, though its aim, which is the same to-day, was simple: to train Communist leaders and organisers in all spheres of educational life, arts, organisation, etc.

The impression of a factory, which the academy made on me in 1932, was absent in 1934. The students were much better dressed, and had a greater feeling of repose. The reorganisation

of 1988 changed it into a single-faculty institute: that of pedagogy. This includes the art and science necessary for lecturers in technicums and for Directors of schools. The régime of the academy approximates more nearly to that of a Western university than it did in 1982. Self-government is now strictly limited to the students' sphere, which includes all students' organisations and discipline. There is no interference with the students by the staff, outside lectures or studies. Student meetings for the discussion of problems of work, recreation, living conditions, etc., now take place once in six or eight weeks. The time given to outside activities has been cut down considerably. Students, however, still respond to any urgent social call. Nearly every student in Moscow attempted to have a hand in the building of the Underground, though he was often regarded as a nuisance by the workers.

Discipline during work is strictly enforced. All students must be in their places before the professor or lecturer enters the room, and attendance must be regular. Continued irregularity results in expulsion. There is Socialist competition between groups, in which they undertake certain obligations; for example, to do good work in a certain subject, to read a certain amount of literature connected with the course, to take up certain purely cultural subjects only indirectly bearing on their work. Shock brigades, consisting of a number of students who are the advance guard in some special activity, are used to stimulate the mass of students to further effort. The shock brigaders set themselves some task just beyond the general plan of achievement. When they have fulfilled the task their standard tends to become the general standard. In this way the quality of work is being much improved. There is both individual and corporate responsibility for discipline. Prizes are given—not many—for a standard reached. They take the form of a stay in a rest-home, books, an increase in the grant, free travel in the U.S.S.R. or abroad. About three per cent of the students in the academy were receiving prizes.

In May 1984 the academy had 548 students, of whom more

than 50 per cent were women. Of the whole number, 85 per cent came from national minorities, mostly Asiatic. There were representatives of thirty-nine nationalities. The students' organisations are of three kinds, political, professional, and cultural. The political includes members of the Party and Komsomol. The latter accounts for 85 per cent of the students. Their work is to make all the students politically conscious, to see that Party directions are carried out, and to obtain new members. Students belong to the professional union of the work in which they will be engaged on completing their course. Most of them here will belong to the Educational Workers' Union, of which there is a branch in the academy. The cultural organisation arranges for leisure occupations. Here are to be found the usual art, literary, drama, sports, music, and other societies. There is an editorial committee for the wall-newspaper, and another for the academy's news-sheet, which is a printed one. Both the wall-newspaper and the news-sheet are vehicles for self-criticism. Here are aired all grievances against other students, staff, administration, and particularly the kitchen committee. Subscriptions to the unions have been greatly reduced. A maintenance grant of 100 roubles a month involves a due of 20 kopecks a month, a grant of 150 roubles incurs 50 kopecks a month. (1 rouble=100 kopecks.)

The students live in hostels some ten minutes' walk from the academy. When I was there, building was going on, the weather was already hot, and my chief impression was of dust, which was all-pervading. The hostel was characterised by a bareness, by a lack of beauty, either in design or colour, and by a lack of space, yet it showed a great improvement on 1932. I am certain the improvement will continue, but it will be many years before university hostels in the U.S.S.R. approach our conception of students' quarters. To house thousands of students adequately, where before the Revolution the demand for accommodation was infinitesimal, would be a task of years, even were the country rich in materials and skilled workers. When the contrary is the

case, one can only admire the efforts already made to solve this problem.

There were fifty women students who were mothers. I was told that it is not usual to find unmarried women in the U.S.S.R. over twenty years of age. The academy has a crèche and nursery-infant school for the children of the married students. I saw both, and, though not up to the highest standard, they were both good. The children sleep with their parents. Having a child does make an added responsibility for the mother, and added demands on her. At times it may cause her considerable worry. It is a problem that is not, in my opinion, entirely solved. I was told that it did not affect the quality of the student's work.

There is a dispensary, a club-room, dining-rooms, an isolation-ward, and a radio-room. All these rooms were very clean, and an attempt was made at beauty by the provision of flowers. I visited several rooms of students. In each case attempts had been made to make the room attractive with flowers or some other personal touch. The administration is now paying much attention to the students' quarters. Prizes are offered for the best-kept and most attractive rooms. All students are being encouraged to put up curtains to their windows. The mass of the people from which the students come have hitherto been deprived of any æsthetic education, but they have an innate love of colour and gaiety. This will help considerably in improving their surroundings.

Nearly all the students in the academy receive a maintenance grant of 100 to 180 roubles a month. Living-quarters, clubs, medical services, crèche, and nursery-infant school are free. The dining-rooms supply meals at cost price, so that the students are enabled to live fairly well.

The academy trains educational administrators, lecturers for training-colleges, heads of schools and nursery-infant schools, child-psychologists (pedologues), and school cultural supervisors for out-of-school activities, as well as cultural workers for adults. It trains organisers, instructors in methods, etc., for regional and area work in adult political education. It helps regional

educational committees. Its speciality is training social science lecturers. It is controlled by the Commissariat of Education, which, in collaboration with the Educational Publishing House and a committee of professors from Moscow and Leningrad, issues the textbooks for the academy. Textbooks in social subjects are prepared by a socio-economics committee.

Students enter the academy at an average age of twenty-one years. Three years' teaching is an essential qualification for admission to the academy. An exception is made in the case of those who have been working as directors of clubs or Pioneer Bases, but those seeking admission on these qualifications must be Party members, since the academy is a Party institute. The entrance examination is compulsory for all applicants for admission. It is a written examination in Russian and mathematics, and oral in the other subjects. Failure in one subject is sufficient to keep a student out. The aim of the academy is to have a worker intelligentsia with a very high standard of education. The higher education institutions have rabfacs attached to them where factory-workers are prepared for entrance to the academy and other institutes. The qualifications for admission to a rabfac have been raised, as the length of the school period has been extended. It is now a seven years' attendance at school.

The academy has thirty-nine post-graduates (in 1934). All post-graduates must have completed at least a three years' course at a higher education institution, and three years' practical work before admission. Each one is attached to a well-known professor. He has his individual plan of work, his seminārs, and his discussion groups to take. He uses specific literature and is required to go to original sources. His course must include the philosophy of Marxism and a study of Marx and Lenin. Every post-graduate has to take an active part in the work of his Chair or faculty. He must attend lectures on education in other institutions. At the end of the course he must publicly defend a thesis. If he comes through this successfully he receives the title of lecturer or reader and may take up work as

such in any higher educational or academic or technical institute.

The thirty-nine subjects which made up the course for students at the academy have now been cut down to twenty-five. Mathematics, Russian (including literature), social science, chemistry and physics, psychology, methods, history, geography, and physical training are compulsory. The work has three aspects: the purely academic, the practical, and the laboratory, which includes biology, physiology, anatomy, chemistry, physics, and a special laboratory for reflexology where experiments are being carried on with dogs and mice. The practical work begins in the third year, and has fifty hours a year (one eighth of all study time) spent on it. Educational practice is carried on in schools or clubs, under the supervision of a specially selected lecturer or tutor. The student is attached to a definite school, technicum, or club, and is set a specific problem. The first stage consists of observation and preparation of an analysis of what he has observed. In the second stage he gives a lesson or lecture. He must prepare a plan for this in consultation with the supervisor. Some of the problems he works on are discipline in the school, the place of expeditions in teaching, the amount of information to be given in a subject, the arrangement of a lesson, school self-government, out-of-school activities, etc. The teaching course here includes nine subjects: political economy; history of the Communist Party; psychology, psychotechnique and methods; physiology; elementary manual work with wood and metal; Russian language and literature; German; physical culture; and military studies.

The methods of study in the academy are those generally accepted. There is first the lecture by the professor, or assistant professor. This is invariably followed by group work with the supervisor, for elaboration, for discussion of difficult points, of possibilities for further study, and of the necessary literature. Each supervisor uses his own methods of group work. The purpose is the same for all, to widen the scope of the lecture. Group work is carried on in the first and second year only, and

not in all subjects. It is to be retained in the more *difficult* subjects as preparation for seminär work. Third- and fourth-year students work in seminärs. The professor sets a number of themes, suggesting the literature necessary. Each student chooses his own and works on it for two or three months. He first makes an oral report to his supervisor and then a written report of the work he has done. The final papers in the last year are for the diploma. Here again he must defend his thesis publicly before a commission, including the Director of diploma work, the Director of the Chair, etc.

First- and second-year students must attend lectures or group work for five hours a day, third- and fourth-year students four hours a day. A lecture lasts two academic hours. Tests are set twice a year in two to four subjects, the papers for which are set by the supervisor in charge. Students are informed of the syllabus and of the literature on which the tests will be set. Some preparation for the tests is done with the supervisor a few days before. The students come in groups of three or four to be examined. Except in mathematics and Russian the examination is oral. Each student has to answer at some length the question put to him by the examiner. This is excellent training for speaking and lecturing. They are marked "excellent," "good," "satisfactory," or "unsatisfactory." A student who receives two or more "unsatisfactory" marks is informed that he is not likely to benefit from a continued stay in the academy and is sent down. This is not serious for the student economically, as there is no likelihood of his being unemployed. In 1933 about nineteen students were sent down from the academy.

The hours of work and pay for the academy staff were laid down in its statutes. A professor must give one lecture a week, at the very least one in two weeks. His pay is 800 roubles a month. The Director of a Chair gets anything from 100 to 800 roubles a month extra. For any lectures other than those stipulated he is paid at the rate of 15 roubles an hour. With some professors an institute will make special arrangements and pay at the rate of 700 roubles a month. An assistant professor receives 250 roubles



a month, and a lecturer 210 roubles. All outside lecturing is paid for, and, as there is a great demand for lectures from clubs, trade unions, etc., the lowest paid on the staff can make 500 roubles a month and the highest 1,000 to 1,500 roubles. Every member of the staff receives two months' holiday in the summer. In winter, institutes close for two weeks. The staff may be called on to do some extra work, but in practice this rarely happens, so that the two weeks are usually holidays.

I listened to a lecture given to a history class. A group of about twenty men and women students of various nationalities were doing modern English history. The lecturer had previously discussed with the students the headings under which the work was to be done. Different students had undertaken to prepare different problems. After the lecture the students reported on the work they had done. The history was surprisingly free from propaganda. There was discussion followed by a summing up by the lecturer. The textbooks used were all Russian and the lecturer was very anxious to obtain some English history-books of the period. I also attended a psychology lecture given to about thirty students. This was the second lecture on the aim of education and elementary pedagogy. The students were all women and looked astonishingly like a group of students in an English training college. Another class I visited was taking physiology. There were about fifteen men and women. The students here were giving ten-minute oral reports on work they had done. There was disagreement with the lecturer, and consequent discussion. Again the final summing up was by the lecturer.

The students generally gave me an impression of keenness. There was a purposive, eager look about them, as though they were setting out on high adventure. All those with whom I talked had great faith in their country's future and in their own powers. It would not be true to say that all personal problems had disappeared, but they played a very minor part in the lives of these builders of Communism. They need to mix with the world outside the U.S.S.R. to broaden their experience and

their judgment, a need which many of them realise. The present-day Soviet student is free from the arrogance and bigotry from which the earlier students suffered as a result of their intensive and narrow political training. The movement to study the culture of the past is influencing the universities, and to-day's student is realising that future culture must develop out of the cultural heritage of the past.

## CHAPTER XV

### *The Teaching Profession*

**"The schoolmaster in our country must be raised to a higher level than he has ever attained before, or could ever attain in a bourgeois society."—LENIN.**

IN 1914 there were 7,200,000 children at school between the ages of eight and fourteen in the U.S.S.R.; in 1984 there were 18,862,900 children at school between those ages. In order to fulfil the decree which says that by 1987 all schools must be seven-year schools, 150,000 more teachers will be required between 1985 and 1987. Herein lies the problem of the teaching profession in the Soviet Union. Progress at such a rate must inevitably bring with it difficulties and shortcomings for the teaching profession unknown in countries where progress has gone on at a leisurely pace, or where it has ceased entirely—where, in fact, there is a surplus of teachers. An educational decree of 1984 enjoins all educational authorities to set about organising ten-year schools. By 1987 it is expected that all towns and industrial centres, as well as large agricultural centres, will have their children at school from eight to eighteen. At present the number of children in nursery-infant schools is about 2,000,000; by 1987 it is hoped to have reached double the number. That means that thousands of nursery-infant school teachers will be required. Before the Revolution the national minorities only received education in the Russian language. At the present time education is being given in over eighty languages. For these nationalities teachers had to be trained.

When the Bolshevik Government first attempted to introduce compulsory universal education, it was faced not only with a shortage of teachers owing to an increase in the number of schools; it was faced by sabotage from thousands of teachers who quite genuinely believed the Bolshevik régime to be bad. In pre-revolutionary Russia the teachers of elementary schools came from the class which considered itself superior to the

working class, but much inferior to everyone above it. They were the sons and daughters of priests, small traders, lowest grade officials, and, comparatively rarely, of peasants. There was a small sprinkling of educated people, revolutionaries who took educating the people as their revolutionary task. With the exception of these the elementary teacher had received no higher education. There were teachers' seminaries, which gave little education and less pedagogical training. K. Ushinsky, one of the best known Tsarist educationists, when speaking of the teacher, described him as a man "for whom secondary education is harmful, because this secondary education leads most frequently to atheism." The elementary teacher, it was stated, "has no use for extensive knowledge."

Perhaps the most unpleasant feature of pre-revolutionary education was the espionage to which the teacher was subjected. As a result of this espionage the best and ablest teachers were often removed from their posts. Golovin, the Director of the Chebakovsky Model School, related to me a recurring incident which throws much light on the attitude to teachers in Tsarist days. Chebakovsky School is close to the railway station through which trains bearing royalty often passed. Whenever that happened, the teachers and doctors were removed from the town as being too dangerous to be within reach of royalty. Many of them took their places in the ranks of the political prisoners and exiles. But the majority, owing to insecurity and lack of education, was timid, ignorant, and servile. It was not surprising, therefore, that many refused to work for the Bolsheviks. Nor was it surprising that many, positively hostile, continued to work, using this opportunity for anti-Bolshevik propaganda. This resulted in a continuance of the system of espionage, but from the opposite side. The enthusiastic children set themselves to watch and report on the teachers, the students on the professors, and, as I have mentioned elsewhere, dismissals were a common consequence. If this spying was irritating and unpleasant, the genuine teacher was compensated by the esteem with which, for the first time in his life, he was coming to be

regarded by the Government. Esteem, however, did not solve the problem of unimaginable lack of all kinds of equipment—books, pencils, pens, ink, paper, chalk; of a shortage of fuel, so that in winter teacher and children often sat in all the garments they possessed and still were cold. Nor did it do much to help the teacher endure the educational theorists who flourished so profusely in the early years of the Revolution, and who insisted that a political and social revolution must mean continuous change in educational method and experiment. This was not experiment as we understand it, carried out by well-qualified and experienced educationists for a reasonable length of time, with a reasonable amount of equipment and apparatus. Every teacher was expected to experiment, and to change her experiment frequently, under conditions amounting to an almost total lack of equipment. Whenever an inspector visited a school, he expected to find a new experiment being carried out. Fortunately this madness did not last many years. Gradually the real educationists assumed control.

Another serious grievance was pay. It was very low, and in the early years was rarely, if ever, paid regularly. In many villages, in far distant towns where the local Soviets were often anti-Bolshevik, teachers' salaries were often months in arrears. This was a habit which some Soviet education authorities have only outgrown very recently. Not only did the teachers suffer from lack of money; they also suffered from being placed in a lower category than the factory-worker for food and housing rations. Altogether the teacher's lot was not an enviable one. Yet, in spite of all, numbers of teachers worked loyally and performed educational miracles in those difficult years.

Gradually, as economic conditions improved, the position of teachers did likewise, until at the present time the qualified Soviet teacher is better off, taking everything into consideration, than his colleague elsewhere, though he does not have nearly so much leisure as the teacher in other countries.

Because factory work was esteemed higher than teaching, the youth of the country flocked to the factory rather than join the

profession. The result was that by 1929 there was an abnormal shortage of teachers even for the U.S.S.R. Steps were taken to remedy this shortage. Articles in the Press, speeches, etc., appeared, eulogising the teaching profession. Local authorities were instructed to pay their teachers regularly, and generally to improve conditions for them. Salary scales were increased. By 1982 teachers had been raised to the status of factory-workers. They were placed in the first category for rations. A decree issued that year by the Central Executive Committee of the Government directed all education authorities to concern themselves immediately with the well-being of their teachers. It was pointed out to all other organisations—Soviets, co-operatives, trade-unions—that the well-being of the teachers was their concern too. The most important matter was the regular payment of salaries. Next to this came housing accommodation. Teachers were to be given extra house-room to allow of study. They were to be supplied with the necessary food, particularly fruit and vegetables. They were to be supplied with books at a reduced price, to be given facilities for improving their qualifications, and their children were to be given special preference in secondary and higher education. At the same time the scale of salaries was again raised.

Salaries are based on a working norm, which varies for the different grades; for the primary schools it is ninety-six hours a month, for incomplete secondary schools seventy-two hours a month, and for secondary schools forty-eight hours a month. Extra pay is given to teachers who also act as Heads, as in rural areas, where the numbers are sometimes as small as thirty, also to teachers of such schools who are in charge of three classes. There is a periodic increase in salary every five years after five years' service and up to twenty years' service. The rate of increase is 72 roubles a year for those with university or specialist training and 60 roubles a year for others for primary schools. For teachers in secondary schools with a university training, the rate of increase is 150 roubles a year, for others 100 roubles.

A differential rate of pay was introduced for teachers in

primary, incomplete secondary and secondary schools, varying with qualifications and quality of teaching. This is to encourage teachers to improve their qualifications and their work. Four rates of pay have been introduced, the lowest being about 75 per cent of the highest. Directors and Heads of schools receive one and a half times as much pay as a class teacher. The salaries vary slightly in different areas. In Moscow on October 1st, 1985, primary teachers were receiving 171 roubles a month, while in the provinces the salary was 188 roubles. For secondary-school teachers in Moscow the average salary was 807 roubles a month; for those in the provinces 261 roubles. In order to compensate for the rise in the price of bread resulting from the abolition of ration cards, an increase of 20 roubles a month was given to all.

A pension is given after twenty-five years' service, at least ten years of which must have been under the Soviets. Serving with the Red Army, temporary disablement, unemployment, or a course of study in an institute counts as service. The pension is 50 per cent of the average monthly salary of the last year of service, but may not exceed 150 roubles a month. Should a pensioner wish to continue some form of employment, he is free to do so, but his total income may not exceed the salary of his last year. On the death of a pensioner, the pension is divided among his dependants, 50 per cent going to his wife and the remainder shared between the other members of his family.

Teachers in rabfacs, Party institutes, schools for defectives, schools for difficult children, receive a pension equal to the full salary of their last year. Village teachers receive free travel facilities to and from conferences, courses of training, also free accommodation and heating.

It is difficult to compare Soviet salaries with English salaries in money owing to the temporarily varying value of the rouble. It is only possible to compare the commodities and services teachers receive for their money. On this basis there is no teacher receiving less than three pounds a week. To the salary must be added social insurance, which includes a pension and is non-contributory. All medical attendance is free. Rent is charged at

the rate of 10 per cent of the salary of every worker. Reductions are made for a number of children. Education for the children of teachers, as for everyone else, is entirely free. Their sons and daughters who attend universities or institutes receive maintenance grants. The teachers themselves are encouraged to attend various courses of from two days a month to one, two, or three years, free. Through the Educational Workers' Union, they obtain tickets for the theatre, the concert, the opera, at a very low price. There are numbers of sanatoria and rest-homes belonging to their union to which those who require special rest or régimes are sent either free or at a low cost. They have the most valuable of all possessions, which no teachers elsewhere have—economic security. So long as the Soviet form of government persists they will have this security. Never need they fear unemployment. Almost equally important, there is no longer any spying on the teachers. I paid lengthy visits to many schools of different types, and feel convinced of that fact. On the contrary, in more than one case the complaint was that no interest was taken in the school.

The reason for the distrust of teachers has disappeared. Very gradually, as conditions improved, the teacher came to realise that at any rate education had benefited by this new form of government. A very active propaganda was carried on by the factory-worker, the Communist peasant, the Red Army, and the children, to win over the teacher. Slowly but surely his psychology underwent a change. He began to adapt himself to the new life, though often the process was painful. He became interested in politics—that is, Soviet politics. From being hostile he became indifferent; from being merely indifferent he became a warm supporter. And now there is no more loyal body of workers in the U.S.S.R. than the teachers. The process was aided by the introduction of the young Communist-trained teachers.

#### THE UNION OF EDUCATIONAL WORKERS

Up to 1984 there was one union for all educational workers. It included everybody in any way connected with education,  
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from the nurse in a nursery-infant school to the professor in an academy. It had a membership of nearly 1,500,000. Time proved this to be a very awkward organisation. In 1984 the All-Union Association of Professional Unions carried out a number of changes in union organisation. Among other changes the Union of Educational Workers was split up into twelve, partly on a professional basis and partly on a territorial basis. The unions are now as follows: the Union of Pre-School Educational Workers of the U.S.S.R.; the Union of Educational Workers in Higher Education and Research Institutes of the U.S.S.R.; the Union of Educational Workers in Politico-Educational Institutions in the U.S.S.R.; and a Union of Educational Workers in Primary, Incomplete Secondary, and Secondary Schools for each of the following territorial units: R.S.F.S.R., Ukraine, White Russia, Georgia, Azerbaidjhan, Armenia, Uzbekistan, Turkestan and Tadjikistan. The basis of organisation remains the same—one enterprise, one union. All those who work in one institution—as, for example, in a ten-year school in Moscow—belong to the Union of Educational Workers of Primary, Incomplete Secondary, and Secondary Schools of the R.S.F.S.R. This union had a membership of 715,645 on October 1st, 1984.

The proportion of women was 69·9 per cent in primary schools, 51·2 per cent in all secondary schools, 44·5 per cent in rabfacs, 88 per cent in technicums.

The immediate concerns of the Union of Educational Workers are pay, conditions of work, social insurance, the material position (food, clothes, housing), and the cultural service of its members.

In the primary schools, the lowest organisational unit of the union is the complete personnel of the school, inclusive of technical workers (caretaker, cook, etc.). Where there are more than fifteen members on the full staff, a local committee of three to five members is elected. A school with a staff of less than fifteen elects an accredited representative, who acts as spokesman in all matters concerning the staff. In the rural

districts, in the lowest State administrative areas, a joint union is formed which elects the Villages Committee of the Union of Educational Workers. The local committees and the villages committees have the same functions. The local committee elects a president, obtains voluntary workers from the most active members of the staff, and appoints a responsible person for each of its activities, as work, pay, social service, and cultural mass work. Not less than 80 per cent of the Union of Educational Workers' members are engaged in some form of unpaid union work.

General meetings of the whole staff are held once a month in urban schools and once in two months in rural schools. The local committee is elected annually. Above the local committee the Union of Educational Workers is organised on a territorial administrative basis, as the regional committee, the district committee, and the central committee. All of these are elected at corresponding union congresses. To each member of a regional committee is assigned a group of village committees and local committees, for whose work he is responsible. In the regional committee, too, nearly all the work is voluntary. The amount of paid work in the Union of Educational Workers has been reduced to a minimum in order to preserve the closest contact with the rank and file and to prevent the machinery becoming autocratic.

The Union of Educational Workers obtain their funds from two sources—from membership subscriptions, which are 1 per cent of the salary, and from a subscription from the economic-administrative education organisations of 1 per cent of their total wages bill. Besides this, in 1938 the social insurance fund was handed over to them. The apportionment of the funds is decided by the central committee of the Union of Educational Workers, with the approval of the All-Union Central Association of Professional Unions.<sup>1</sup> In 1935 the subscriptions to the Union of Educational Workers of primary and both types of secondary schools in R.S.F.S.R. amounted to 12·1 million roubles. Nearly

<sup>1</sup> Professional Unions include all trade unions.

40 per cent of this went in administration. The rest was used to improve members' conditions: 18·8 went for sanatoria, health resorts, and rest-homes, and to the mutual assistance fund for individual help; 12·2 per cent to cultural service, Educational Workers' clubs, district and regional clubs, training of personnel, physical culture, etc.; 9·7 per cent to equipment for local committees. The contribution from administrative organisations for the same year was 12·9 million roubles. The greater part of this went to the improvement of conditions for members. Nearly 140 million roubles social insurance money was received in 1935 by the Union of Educational Workers in primary and secondary schools in the R.S.F.S.R. Of this, 50 million was spent on medical assistance and crèches; 15·5 million on retiring pensions for members still at work; 34 million on pensions for retired members, on building rest-homes, sanatoria, and health resorts; 18·7 million on sick pay; 7·7 million in assistance to sanatoria and health resorts; 8·5 million on building houses for teachers; nearly 8 million in supplying necessities for pregnancy and confinements, for extra food and care during breast-feeding, for the support of children in nursery-infant schools, sanatoria, Pioneer camps, feeding schoolchildren, etc. I have deliberately given this income and expenditure in detail since nothing is so suggestive of the life of a community or organisation as its budget.

The union considers it one of its chief aims to create among its members a right attitude to work, and to have really first-class work. The most successful method for the achievement of this aim has been found to be Socialist competition and shock brigadism. According to the latest figures (January 1st, 1935), 51·2 per cent of the teachers are participating in Socialist competition. Of these, 55 per cent are shock brigaders. Prizes were given to 28 per cent of the shock brigaders. Prizes consist of money, books, a stay in a rest-home or sanatorium, travel, clothes, etc. For example, in the 25th Model School of the October District in Moscow the Director received a prize of 2,500 roubles, and the Director of the studies department 1,000

roubles, while 5,000 roubles was divided among the best teachers.

The union directs the whole movement for improving school work. The local committee organises study-work discussions. The whole of the school staff attends these. At these meetings are discussed Socialist agreements and the duties of the educational worker; possible improvements; experiences are exchanged, a systematic inspection of the work is arranged, and shock-brigade candidates are selected for prizes. The discussions are held once a month.

The Union of Educational Workers takes part in drawing up regulations dealing with work and social insurance, also in making collective agreements with the economic-administrative organisations. The Union sees that the agreements are kept and co-operates in the settlement of disputes between teachers and the administration. Collective agreements define the pay for extra duties such as acting headships, class responsibility in secondary schools, directing the study cabinet, library supervision, or any duties that involve extra working hours. Disputes between teachers and administration are settled by a commission consisting equally of members of the local committee and the administration. Should a settlement not be reached, or should the teacher be dissatisfied with the decision, he can take the matter to court.

The local committee decides the amounts to be given from the social insurance fund for illness, pregnancy, extra food during breast-feeding, etc. In 1935, 7.7 million roubles were spent on places in sanatoria, rest-homes, and health resorts, 82,000 members received places in rest-homes, 1,600 cures in health resorts of the All-Union type, and 8,000 in sanatoria belonging to local administration units. Besides places in general homes, many district and region Unions of Educational Workers have their own rest-homes and sanatoria, catering for a membership of between 5,000 and 6,000. The central committee of the Union has two palatial sanatoria in Kislovodsk and the Crimea.

Another side of the Union of Educational Workers' activities may strike readers as somewhat unusual—that is, the supply

of food and commodities. The abolition of rationing for bread and cereals has sent the prices of these goods up temporarily and has also involved other goods—a situation which has affected the village teacher more than those of the town. The union is organising food-supply bases for the villages. Together with the administrations, it is organising collective vegetable cultivation and sowing and the acquisition of cattle for individual and collective use. In 1984 the Government of the R.S.F.S.R. granted 15 million roubles for these activities, and in 1985 it made a further grant of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  million roubles.

As an example, the Leningrad District Union of Educational Workers received a grant from the Executive Committee of over 800,000 roubles to buy goats, cows, pigs and poultry for the education workers in its district. For the teachers in town, as well as the administrative workers, dining-rooms are organised, where food is obtained at cost price.

The union organisations, including the local committees, appoint inspectors from their best shock brigaders to inspect conditions of work, the observation of agreements and labour laws, and dining-rooms.

The mass cultural work of the union includes the improvement of teachers' qualifications, political education, facilities for the enjoyment of the arts, organisation of excursions and tours, organisation of rest and cultural development, training of teachers, and their participation in social work.

The centres of all these activities are the Union of Educational Workers clubs.

In the best of these clubs nothing seems to be lacking. One such that I visited belongs to the Leningrad District Educational Workers' Union. It is housed in the former Prince Yossou-poff's palace, with its frescoes and pictures and carpets, its plush and gold, left intact. There is a theatre, to which the best companies are invited to give performances. These are paid from the union funds, and members pay a very small price for admission. Membership of the club is free. Professional concerts and cinema shows are given in the club. There is a library, and a

large reference-room where teachers may not only come to work but to obtain help with their work. A very fine dining-room seats some hundreds. The Kitchen Committee produces meals at cost price. There is the usual children's room. Facilities for all kinds of amateur activities are supplied.

One of the most interesting rooms in the club into which I was taken is called the Pedagogical Cabinet. It is a large room furnished with reference-books, charts, diagrams, filing cabinets, etc. Here are studied all educational problems of the Leningrad District. Here come teachers for consultation and assistance. From here issue suggestions for teaching, for syllabuses, reports on research work, etc. In 1934 the club arranged 200 social-political and 400 scientific lectures. The library lent over one million books in that year.

Several of the large drawing-rooms had excellent dancing-floors.

There is still a very great shortage of teachers, particularly of qualified and experienced ones. It will be a number of years before this deficiency is made good and before the average level of teaching reaches that of Great Britain. Though the attitude to children and to the profession is better than it is, generally speaking, in this country, yet this lack of experience, this lack of a teaching heritage, at present makes the Soviet teacher on the whole a poorer teacher than her British colleague.

The urgent need for teachers has created two types of training—one a permanent method, preparing qualified teachers, the other temporary, preparing unqualified teachers to serve until such time as conditions will allow all to qualify. Teachers for nursery-infant schools and primary schools at present receive three years' training at a pedagogical technicum. They enter this at fifteen or sixteen years of age. When the ten-year school has become a reality everywhere, the entrance age will be eighteen. The work done in a pedagogical technicum is a stage lower than that done in English training colleges. The course includes, besides general subjects, social science (that is, Marxian politics and economics), pedagogy and psychology, practical work with

wood, metal, cardboard, etc., in the workshops which form part of every technicum. Teaching practice takes up 80 per cent to 40 per cent of the course (beginning in the second year). Every technicum has laboratories for the sciences, and often an agricultural plot for agronomics, particularly those which train teachers for rural areas.

Teachers for both kinds of secondary schools receive four years' training in a pedagogical institute. This is equivalent to a university course. Hitherto every applicant to an institute had to complete three years' teaching before admission. With the longer preparatory course this is being dropped. No one untrained in pedagogy, psychology, or child study can be accepted in these schools. As so often happens in the U.S.S.R., practice lags behind theory. Owing to the rapid increase in both types of secondary schools, it has not been possible for every teacher to receive a university training. The best teachers from elementary schools are taken without this training where the need is urgent and placed in the secondary schools. These are given all facilities to obtain this training, and it is hoped that by 1937 the regulation regarding university qualifications will apply over the whole Union.

The course of study in a pedagogical institute includes political economy, history of the Communist Party, physiology, elementary manual work in the workshop, a foreign language, physical culture, and military education, besides the general subjects in which the teacher will specialise. Teaching practice begins in the third year. The length of the period varies between a third and an eighth of the time. The student is attached to one particular school, and given one problem on which to work under the supervision of an assistant professor. He begins by observation, which has to be completed by a written analysis of what he has seen and a report of his impressions. In the second stage he gives a lesson, the plan of which he must prepare for his supervisor, showing every stage in detail. The lesson is then given in the presence of the supervisor, class teacher, and other students, all of whom will meet after the lesson for criticism. During

practice the student must work on such problems as the importance of expeditions in school, discipline, self-government, out-of-school work with children, the preparation of lessons, the amount of matter a lesson should contain, its arrangement, etc.

Pedagogical institutes have the usual social arrangements. They are all becoming residential, though the hostels are not necessarily in the same block of buildings as the institute. Large numbers of the students are married. Where the husband and wife are studying in the same institute, they live together in the married quarters of the hostel.

It must not be assumed that completion of the course at the technicum or institute relieves the teacher of the duty of further study. To raise the qualifications of workers (this includes professional workers) has long been a most insistent slogan. Every institute organises refresher courses and study courses for teachers. There are special pedagogical institutes for improving the qualifications of teachers. The shortage of teachers is most keenly felt now in the secondary schools. To make good this shortage the pedagogical institutes have special evening and correspondence courses for teachers in primary schools who wish to take up work in the secondary schools. Local education authorities, or the local branch of the Educational Workers' Union, organise similar courses.

There are numbers of teachers in primary and nursery-infant schools who have only received short-term training. The need was so great that the authorities were forced to take young men and women with only a seven years' schooling, give them an intensive three months' course, and then put them in charge of a class. These teachers are drawn from the ranks of the factory workers and the peasants. For them there are special evening and holiday classes to improve their general education and their teaching capacity. But every teacher is expected to attend some course or other. For the young and inexperienced very detailed help is given in the practice of teaching. They apparently need much more precise instructions than do English teachers. The Russian generally is not used to planning in the abstract. He



must be confronted with concrete examples. The young teacher is given very detailed information on planning a lesson, on method, on apparatus and its use. The pedagogical stations organise periodic education exhibitions. These are explained in great detail to the visiting teachers, and are found to be very helpful, particularly in more backward areas.

Travelling education exhibitions are a permanent feature of education for teachers. By this means the latest educational knowledge is brought to the teacher in distant provinces, in isolated villages. The expert who accompanies the exhibition may organise discussion groups or a conference for further elucidation of problems. The pedagogical practicum is another method of improving teaching. It is a short course of from three to five days. A model school is selected, to which are sent the young teachers. At first they observe, then they give lessons. These are discussed in minute detail with the class teacher, the school educationist, and the director. The young teachers return to their schools and are expected to show improvement as a result.

Every education borough has its local Methods Association, whose object is to improve the quality of teaching in its area. It comprises about ten to fifteen of the most experienced teachers and educators in its district, and meets once or twice a month. Any young teacher can come to the association for help in any problem. The association organises seminärs for the teaching of special subjects; it selects experienced teachers to visit the young teacher in the class and there give constructive criticism. It appoints the best teachers, who are also the most active politically and socially, as supervisors for the district. This supervisor directs the teachers who are at the head of the Methods Association. He or she meets all new teachers, informs them of the latest methods, helps them to plan their work, to select textbooks and apparatus, to organise expeditions, and so on.

Regional teachers' conferences, which are held every six months, are a means of bringing all the teachers of a region together for the discussion of achievement, of methods of

fulfilment of educational plans, and other problems. There is an exchange of experience, a contact with new people, which is particularly stimulating to the teacher buried away in some remote place. The conferences organise special methods committees and subject committees of the most experienced teachers. These are at the service of any teacher in any difficulty.

In the bigger schools are organised methods committees from members of the staff, and include a mistress of method and child-psychologist. These committees thrash out problems of teaching, planning of lessons, textbooks, expeditions, self-government, and discipline. The senior teacher in the school is expected to help the junior. Periodically the senior is present at a lesson given by the junior. At the end of the lesson he praises what is good, shows where improvement is necessary and possible, and how this may be achieved. As far as I could gather, the younger teachers, so far from resenting this help, welcome it eagerly. There is a great deal of pooling of experience within one school as well as outside. I never came across a case where a teacher kept to herself her particularly good ideas and their application. To the modern Soviet teacher such an attitude is incomprehensible. This atmosphere of co-operation and goodwill is a very striking feature of the teaching profession.

Needless to say, the profession makes great demands on the teachers. I doubt whether teachers in any other country would comply so willingly, if at all. Conscientious Soviet teachers at present have very little leisure. Their free time is not given up only to self-improvement. They are expected to interest themselves in the children's out-of-school activities. They have to take an active part in the political and social life surrounding them. This is particularly the case in the village, where the teacher is the starting-point and centre of all the cultural activities. They are often called upon to volunteer to teach the illiterate or semi-literate in factory or farm. Usually these extra services are paid for, but sometimes they are regarded as the social obligation of the teacher, and are unpaid. The teachers have to help to initiate libraries, reading-rooms and Red Corners

for the adult population. Once a month the class teacher is expected to visit the homes of the younger pupils. At school they must be present at parents' group discussions on the care and upbringing of children, discussions which are particularly common in nursery-infant schools. The Soviet teacher has to spend much more time writing up notes of lessons than his British colleague. Very detailed records of the pupils' progress, psychological and social as well as intellectual, have to be kept. Much of this written recording will disappear when the Soviet teacher becomes experienced. At present all these extra activities make severe demands on the Soviet teacher. Without a doubt he is overworked, but it is inevitable during the present period.

The great advantage the Soviet teacher has over those of any other country lies in the relationship between the body of teachers and other groups in the community. They do not have to spend the energies which should go to the improvement of their profession or the enjoyment of leisure in fighting for their economic rights or for the rights of children, or for the improvement of their social status. The Soviet teachers do not regard Government departments as their natural enemies; they do not live in an atmosphere of hostility, either economic or sex. On the contrary, they are surrounded by an atmosphere of friendliness and co-operation. They are at one with each other and with the rest of the community. This, as every Soviet teacher informs the visitor, goes far to compensate for the strain of too much work, for the lack of those comforts which his colleagues in other countries take as a matter of course. There is no reason to question the teachers' belief that in a comparatively few years' time the position of the teacher in the U.S.S.R. will be better than that of the teachers in any other country.

The teacher works five days and has the sixth day off in urban schools, and works six days with the seventh day off in rural schools. Besides this there are three days—anniversaries of the October Revolution, Lenin's death, and May Day—which are universal holidays. In the summer the primary schools, as stated before, close on May 15th and the secondary schools at the end

of May, and reopen on September 1st.<sup>1</sup> The teachers, however, only get two months of this as holiday. The rest of the time has to be spent in conferences, discussion, and the preparation of syllabuses and the necessary apparatus. In the winter and spring the schools have two weeks' holiday. During this holiday, too, the teachers must be prepared to spend time in conference, discussion, and preparation. The school day lasts from four and a half to six hours. In the rural schools, where the week is longer, the day is shorter.

Promotion is not a burning question in the U.S.S.R. There is such a shortage of people for higher posts and headships that the competition is for teachers and not for posts. Any good teacher is quickly discovered and given promotion. Political and social activity is always taken into consideration. Other things being equal, the candidate who can show a good record of these activities is given preference. So far the need to work out a system of promotion has not arisen. Let me emphasise again that there is complete equality between the sexes, so that sex plays no part in deciding appointments.

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix II.

## CHAPTER XVI

### *Adult Education*

**"An illiterate people cannot build the Communist State."—LENIN.**

ON any and every occasion Lenin hammered this home. The problem was appalling. A population of 160 millions, 68 per cent of which was illiterate ! An unimaginable shortage of teachers, schools, equipment, and textbooks ! Yet with an illiterate people there could be no industrialisation of the country on any scale comparable to its needs. The factory-worker must be able to read instructions, blue prints, etc. There could be no improvement in agriculture that would satisfy the country's needs until the peasant learnt to read and write. As usual in the U.S.S.R., youth came to the country's aid.

Youth joined the campaign for the elimination of illiteracy. Soon a society, known as the "Down with Illiteracy Society," was formed to organise and plan the work. The first task was to eliminate illiteracy, to teach reading and writing. Then was to follow general adult education, Krupskaya, Lenin's widow, practically gave herself up to adult education.

What were the methods used ? The schools were called in to help. In nearly every school was organised a children's cell of the Down with Illiteracy Society. The cell organised into brigades all those children who were willing to help. Their first task was to find out the number of illiterates in the district allotted to the brigade. Armed with paper and pencil, they made a tour of all the highways and byways, going down dark and forbidding alleys, into evil-smelling apartments. Often in those days they were met with curses; sometimes a jug of water was thrown at them. Nothing daunted, they returned the next day. Finally the lists were ready. Came the problem of a room for the lessons. Sometimes it was possible to use a room in the school, sometimes

# GENERAL ADULT EDUCATION SYSTEM. - 1934.

| EDUCATIONAL LEVEL |     |   |     | Type of School  | Length of Course | Division of Study Time                    | Observation  |
|-------------------|-----|---|-----|---|------------------|---|--|
| 1                 | 5yr | 0 | 4yr | <b>HIGHER SCHOOL</b><br>(Completes 7 yr. School Syllabus) | 2 yrs.           | Year<br>Month<br>Day<br>1st Year<br>2nd " | 9½ months<br>18 study days<br>4 hrs.<br>691 hrs.<br>684 "  |
| 0                 | 5yr | 0 | 4yr |   |                  | Total                                     | 1,375 hrs  |
| 5                 | 3yr | 0 | 4yr |   |                  | Year<br>Month<br>Day                      | 9 months<br>13 days<br>4 hrs.  |
| 5                 | 3yr | 0 | 4yr |   |                  | Year<br>Month<br>Day                      | 9 months<br>13 days<br>4 hrs.  |
| 5                 | 3yr | 0 | 4yr | <b>POST-ALPHABET</b><br>2 yr. Syllabus                    | 5 Months         | Year<br>Month<br>Day                      | 12 days<br>4 hrs.  |
| 5                 | 3yr | 0 | 4yr |   |                  | Year<br>Month<br>Day                      | 12 days<br>4 hrs.  |
| 5                 | 3yr | 0 | 4yr | <b>ALPHABET</b><br>1 yr. Syllabus                         | 4 Months         | Year<br>Month<br>Day                      | 12 days<br>4 hrs.  |
|                   |     |   |     | Literacy School   |                  |   | All adult education takes place in the evening. On completion of each course student receives a certificate and is entitled to admission to the next course. |

in the local Soviet. Another problem: no textbooks of any kind. With youthful enthusiasm they set about making cut-out alphabets. They organised concerts to obtain money for exercise-books and pencils. No sooner was one problem solved than another confronted the children. Most of their would-be pupils were mothers with small children for whom at that time there was neither crèche nor nursery-infant school. What was to be done? A room in the school was arranged as a children's room. Two monitors were elected to take charge of the children while the mothers were busy learning to read and write. When all was ready, classes began. Many children taught their parents at home. Soon every factory had its group laboriously spelling out the alphabet. The factory dining-room had a Red Corner which became the centre of educational activity. Every village and settlement had a reading-hut. To these Red Corners and reading-huts would come the schoolchildren to read aloud news of the day from the papers. They organised reading evenings, to take the place of the gossip and drink evenings, when they read books to the villagers. Socialist competition was organised between different brigades of youthful teachers, between children and parents. The children infected their parents with their enthusiasm for learning. The infection spread, and old men who had scoffed at pens and exercise-books came along to the children asking to be taught. These children literally taught millions to read and write.

The Down with Illiteracy Society, helped by Party workers and the Komsomol, organised literacy points in all industrial and agricultural centres, in enterprises, State farms, and collective farms. The work was pursued with such vigour and energy that by 1982 in Republics like White Russia, R.S.F.S.R., and the Ukraine, illiteracy was abolished for all those under fifty-five years. In that year 80 million people—that is, half the population of the country—attended school of one kind or another. Inability to read and write is fast disappearing in the whole Union. The number of adult cultural workers has increased greatly, so that the time given to this work by schoolchildren

has correspondingly diminished. The work is now almost entirely in the hands of adults.

The chief problem of adult education now is to give those who are just literate an education equivalent to two or four years' elementary schooling. For this there is still a shortage of workers, textbooks, and accommodation. In industrial centres, active young workers who have received their seven years' education are drawn into this work. It forms their social obligation. Every self-respecting worker in the U.S.S.R. has some sort of social work to perform. In the agricultural districts, where it is not at all easy to obtain volunteers for this work, paid teachers are generally employed. Many of these teachers have still only had four years' schooling themselves. In order to help these teachers, the Down with Illiteracy Society (with the aid of the Commissariat of Education and the local education authority) organises seminärs, to which come fully-trained teachers to give instruction in methods, in preparing lessons, use of apparatus, choice of textbooks, etc. This work is the social duty of these qualified teachers, and their union must free them from all other obligations. These instructors in their turn receive help from trained methods specialists, are supplied with literature on adult education, have discussion groups organised for them, and are given every encouragement to improve their work.

Periodically there are district conferences of all those engaged in this branch of adult education. Recently there has been a division of labour between the Down with Illiteracy Society and the education authorities. The former, in conjunction with the trade unions, draws up lists of all those who are only just literate. It carries on propaganda explaining the purpose and meaning of this adult education. It supplies the accommodation and equipment for the adult schools, collects money for the work, obtains voluntary teachers, is responsible for the regular attendance of both pupils and teachers, and generally tries to create such conditions as will make for good work.

The education authorities train the teachers, give guidance in method to the paid volunteer teachers, and supply the school



with textbooks, syllabuses, and notes on lessons. Upon the local education authority lies the duty of organising study rooms for the teachers, as well as model schools. In a word, they are responsible for the organisation of all the work in the schools for the just-literate. Agreements for the elimination of illiteracy or the improvement of the semi-literate are being organised between local education authorities and factories, farms and village Soviets. It is becoming a point of honour with factories and farms to eliminate illiteracy entirely and to run schools for the semi-literate. An example of how it is done may prove instructive.

The Red Putilov Works in Leningrad has been in the forefront of this work for years. On December 1st, 1933, the register gave 289 workers who only just knew the alphabet and 1,509 workers in the next stage. Of the first group 90 per cent, and of the second group 88·6 per cent, attended school. The reason for not having the full number is put down to insufficient preparatory work among the workers owing to a change of organiser for this work. Every new worker has to pass through the literacy sector of the factory committee, where he fills up a special literacy questionnaire. The information is then entered on the form entitled "The Report on Literacy." A card index is kept of all workers. Should one leave the factory, his card is removed from the file.

In the Red Putilov they are carrying on a fight for 100 per cent attendance at classes. They begin with mass explanatory work. Discussion continues in the shops among the different shifts and brigades. Those who have not yet succumbed to the mass pressure to learn receive individual treatment. They are called in for discussion to the shop committee and to the literacy sector of the factory committee. If this fails, there is the Comrades' Court, which consists of an elected number of workers who try and pronounce judgment on the "criminal." There is also the Blackboard of "Shame" on which go the names of those so anti-social as to refuse to learn. The latest measure is to put on the Blackboard the name of the chief of the brigade

of workers, or the leader of the bench, with which the intractable one works. There are not many who survive these methods of persuasion and refuse to go to school. The shop foreman has to announce that attendance at literacy schools is compulsory. In some cases the foreman regards absence from school as absence from work. When shock brigade cards are given, attendance at school is taken into account. Just as the "bad" are punished, so are the "good" rewarded. Those who attend best and make most progress are noticed on the wall-newspaper "For Literacy," are given tickets for the theatre, cinema, House of Culture, etc. The best pupils are given prizes.

Lack of special accommodation was for some time a serious obstacle. This has now been overcome, and in all the important shops in the factory there are properly equipped classrooms. These rooms are always open for study. In those shops where there are no special classrooms, work is carried on in the shop committee room, the Party cell room, the Red Corner, the foreman's office—anywhere, in fact, where seating accommodation can be found. But, wherever school is being carried on, it is insisted that there must be chalk, a blackboard, a table, and enough chairs.

In every shop there is an organiser for literacy. In 1984 the Red Putilov works had thirty-six organisers, each of whom had his list of illiterates and just-literates. The organiser is responsible for making up the group, for the necessary accommodation, for the selection of a voluntary teacher, for a strict time-table, and finally for the regular attendance of pupil and teacher. Sometimes there are joint conferences with the cultural organisers. All the literacy work in the Red Putilov centres round the shop cells of the Down with Illiteracy Society. The cell in the energetics shop is a good example. This shop supplies energy to the whole works, and works in five shifts. In the school year 1982-83, 78 illiterates were taught in this shop; in 1983-84, 102 illiterates were taught. During these two years all the work was done by volunteer cultural workers of the Down with Illiteracy Society. All the members of the school are members of the Down with Illiteracy

Society. It was rewarded with the Red Banner as the best cell in the district. "All the alphabet classes are taught by voluntary teachers; 12.6 per cent of the second stage are taught by paid teachers. These latter work in the most difficult and responsible shops. On December 1st, 1934, there were 148 volunteer teachers in the works.

"Great attention is now being paid to the quality of the work. With this end in view, all the volunteer teachers are released from other social duties. Not one of our volunteer teachers begins work without having undergone a preparatory course with the methods instructor. The course deals with (1) the aims and problems of the schools for literacy; (2) syllabuses for Russian and arithmetic; (3) fixing a standard for the various grades; (4) how to make a preparatory report of attainment. Before teaching is begun, the methods instructor discusses the syllabus with the teacher and makes suggestions for methods. The syllabus is divided up into weekly sections. Every teacher must make notes of lessons. The illiterates attend classes twice a week for two hours. The Red Putilov has paid methods instructors and volunteer teachers with a university training" (from a report on adult education, 1935).

Not every factory takes the question of literacy so seriously as the Red Putilov. There are many where the work is very unsatisfactory, but there is none where some work is not being done with illiterates and semi-literates in order to fulfil the aim of giving all adults by the end of 1937 an education equivalent to four years' primary school.

The experience of a country district is equally interesting. The Biisky District is to be found in Western Siberia. In accordance with the plan of the Commissariat of Education, 1,200 semi-literates had to be given an education equal to four years' primary school. The work began with an enquiry into the educational conditions existing. The result was interesting, twenty-seven collective farms presenting the following picture. There are 667 responsible members, leaders of brigades, directors, and members of the management. Out of that number, 66

per cent have an education equal to or lower than Class 2 (nine years) of a village school. In spite of all the work that has been done for adult education, the Soviet and Party "Actives"<sup>1</sup> have not wholly eliminated their own illiteracy or semi-literacy. It was decided that forty adult schools were needed—thirty-one for the villages and nine for the towns—to educate the workers of the leading trade unions. This proposal was approved by the district education authority and the bureau of the town's Party committee, and by the district executive committee. The organisation of the schools was carried out in accordance with the information obtained as to the number of semi-literate brigade leaders, book-keepers, members of the management, etc. The size of the classes was fixed at between twenty-five and thirty. It was agreed that first place should be given to those in the leading positions. In eleven schools, 68 per cent of the pupils consisted of brigade leaders, book-keepers, presidents, and members of the kolkhoz management; 32 per cent consisted of general kolkhoz workers. It is interesting to note that there were eleven presidents of village Soviets among the pupils.

All the pupils were examined. The results showed that the majority knew in arithmetic the four rules, a few percentages, and fractions. In Russian language they were all backward. There arose the very serious problem of whether to have paid or volunteer teachers. It was decided that the work of eliminating semi-literacy in the kolkhoz demanded payment, and the whole network of adult schools should be run without exception on paid labour. In the towns it was possible and desirable to attract volunteer teachers. They were drawn into the work from the primary and incomplete secondary schools. A director of an adult school was paid a quarter of the salary of the Head of a village school. A teacher was paid 1 rouble an hour from the general funds. The local budget covered the expenses of textbooks and equipment. The Down with Illiteracy Society gave 50 per cent towards the expenses. With the help of this well-organised branch, and with the aid of the

<sup>1</sup> Active—a group of the most active workers.

kolkhozniks<sup>1</sup> themselves, finance was not an insurmountable obstacle.

The teachers selected were all qualified by education if not by training. Out of twenty-eight teachers, twenty had finished a pedagogical technicum, four had higher education, and four had finished the semiletka (seven-year school). They were all considered definitely educated and able to deal with the work of the schools.

Other problems presented themselves—permanent accommodation, lighting, and so on. One by one they, too, were solved. For the school of the "Active" the best school building in the village nearest to the kolkhoz was used. Every school was well lighted and warm, and the caretaker was paid regularly. The acute shortage of textbooks was a great hindrance at first. The difficulty was surmounted by using for geography, nature study, and grammar the textbooks used by Classes 8 and 4 in the children's school. The Head of this school also helped with the necessary visual apparatus.

The course of study in Western Siberia, and particularly in the Biisky District, could not last the six months fixed by Narkompros. The longest period for which time could be spared from work in the fields was five months. After April 15th no one, whether president or field labourer, would attend classes. Nor would anyone come before November 1st. It was therefore agreed that it was impossible to complete the four years' primary education in two years of adult education. The choice lay between cutting down the syllabus or extending the time to three years. The time extension was chosen.

The work carried on by this district, with slight variations, is to be found all over the U.S.S.R. In many cases it is not nearly so well organised, but there is not a corner of the Union where an attempt at education is not made. Often, during the summer months, classes will be held in the rest-hour in the fields, or they may be political hours, to discuss the latest conference resolution, a new loan, a new decree, etc. This stimulates the desire

<sup>1</sup> Members of a collective farm.

for further study in the winter-time, when there is leisure.

A powerful force in adult education is the worker and peasant correspondents movement. Every shop in a factory, every farm brigade, has its correspondent. It is his job to write to the Press—it may be to the farm or factory news-sheet, to the local or central newspaper—on any problem affecting the work and life in factory or farm. He has an inviolable right to anonymity. Now, as soon as the correspondent begins to write he becomes interested in writing, and he begins to read to see how others do it. Reading stimulates discussion, and so the centre attracts a circle, and the study of literature begins. They invite an author to the factory or farm to read to them and discuss with them his latest book. They are not shy of criticism nor niggardly with help. When an author contemplates writing a novel, for example, dealing with the civil war in the Caucasus, he will enlist the help of the local inhabitants. Old men who still hold a pen as though it were a weapon—which, indeed, it is—will laboriously set down their experiences in minute detail. It is because of this that the local colour in all good Soviet novels is always correct. The reading which this writing stimulates includes classical as well as modern literature, foreign as well as Soviet literature.

Besides writing to the Press, the peasant or worker correspondent writes to authors on any literary problem that may be worrying him. There are about two million of these correspondents practising the craft of writing, and educating themselves in the process. This process is further aided by the wall-newspaper which is to be found in every shop in a factory, in every section of a State or collective farm, and in every office. Contributions to these are severely criticised, and a man or woman must show improvement if the critics are to be satisfied.

Much use is made of museums and galleries, particularly in the winter and on the weekly holiday. It is rarely that the visitor to one of these does not come across a group of earnest workers or peasants, guided by a Komsomolka, receiving cultural education.

Another educational aid is the wireless. In a Russian

household the wireless is rarely silent. It is turned on by the first member of the household to be up—it may be 7 a.m. or earlier—and turned off by the last to go to bed, perhaps at two the following morning. I have even heard that in some flats it is never turned off at all. There are different transmission stations for different purposes, so that educational lectures can go on side by side with jazz. Russian and foreign language lessons are given over the wireless; nature study, history, geography, health and hygiene, and, of course, politics, receive their allotted hours. Cultural as well as academic education is provided by the clubs. Every industrial enterprise has its club, sometimes housed palatially, at other times housed quite modestly. Similarly, every agricultural enterprise, every administrative organisation, has its club. In these clubs are carried on all kinds of activities. There are art, drama, music, literary, technical, sport, dancing, intellectual, and other circles. If the club is very well off, it will have its own theatre, to which it will periodically invite companies from the best professional theatres. Every club has a children's section where parents can leave their offspring.

The present tendency is for many factories to combine and have a joint cultural central club as well as their own smaller ones. For example, the House of Culture in the Viborgsky District in Leningrad is supported by the trade unions and the fifty-six factories which it serves. This was built as a club, but accommodation is already insufficient. It has a theatre which seats 4,000, in which performances are given by professional companies and by the club's own dramatic society. The performances of the latter are free, while for those of professionals a charge is made. There are performances every day. From six to eight every evening there are concerts. The theatre is also used for scientific lectures, when scientists acquaint the workers with the latest discoveries. Not long before my visit I was told that a packed theatre of workers listened to a lecture on the splitting of the atom and its significance to humanity.

The front rows in this theatre are reserved for shock brigaders of the different factories.

There is a well-stocked library of cultural and technical works, with an expert librarian to advise readers. A separate reading-room solves the problem of where to read for the worker who has no privacy in the home. There are various study groups, including circles for Party members and political and social organisers. This club has a special section for foreign workers containing books, fiction and other, as well as newspapers, political pamphlets, etc., in German and English.

Music and sport hold important places in the club. There is a special room for the medical examination of those who wish to take up any sport. Here a first aid group receives training.

In this club there is an excellent children's department. The chief room is a large playroom with all kinds of constructional games, all of which have been made by older children. Much painting and drawing is done here. It was here that I saw that delightful children's dancing mentioned in another chapter.

There is a good restaurant, where meals can be obtained at very reasonable prices.

In Kharkov, four factories have combined and organised a conservatoire of music for their workers. Everywhere the factory workers show amazing initiative in arranging for their cultural development. Nowadays the impetus rarely comes from the top. It is nearly always the workers themselves who originate and carry through schemes.

The finest up-to-date cultural club is in Moscow, known, not undeservedly, as the Palace of Culture. When I was there in 1984 it was not yet completed. Here, although only built eighteen months, the accommodation was already inadequate and a new block was being erected. This was one of the clubs built on the initiative of the workers from the various factories in the district, including the Dynamo and the Amo factories. The expenses were borne by the unions and factories, and the club is now supported by these. The use of the club is free, and meals are supplied at cost price in the very attractive, exquisitely clean dining-room, where a very good orchestra was playing when I was there. A charge is made for admission to the cinema



and the theatre. There are the beginnings of a workers' evening university, and it is hoped as soon as the new block is finished to throw the club open to professional and administrative workers in the district, and so to break down the barriers between manual and intellectual workers. In the year 1984, owing to inadequacy of accommodation, membership was limited to factory workers.

Architecturally the club is very finely conceived. It has a very impressive frontage, a spacious entrance-hall, a large lounge. Both the lighting and furniture are modern but not eccentric. The lounge was being used for an exhibition of paintings by a team of artists that had been sent to the Urals to paint industrial construction. There was a smaller photographic exhibition of the architect, builders, and constructional episodes connected with the building of the club. The club has a theatre, cinema, library, bookstalls, billiard-rooms, study-rooms for economics, politics, etc., and very pleasant dressing-rooms for the artistes, besides the restaurant.

The new block is to contain a theatre seating 4,000 people, 600 rooms for various clubs and study groups, a small sports stadium and observatory, a children's playground and section, and a swimming-pool. When the new block is finished the workers' evening university is to assume full stature. Here the factory worker will be able to develop himself intellectually and artistically, and thus help to realise Stalin's direction of creating a workers' intelligentsia.

The Director, who must be a good organiser and administrator, is appointed by the trades unions concerned. He must be a well-educated, cultured person, with a good knowledge of the theatre and cinema. He has two sub-directors. There is also a resident medical officer and assistant, and a librarian, as well as the usual staff.

Quite a different type of educational institution was the Peasant House that I visited in Moscow. These Peasant Houses, which are to be found in large towns and on State and collective farms, are (as the name suggests) educational centres for

peasants. They too cater for scientific, technical, and general education. They too have children's departments, where the children are cared for while the parents are being educated. To the Peasant House in Moscow come those peasants sent by their collective farm, or artel, to attend a conference, to lay a complaint, or to ask for special aid. For most of them it is their first acquaintance with a town. Most of them have no experience of the conditions of life outside their village, and little experience of the ordinary amenities of life.

Every visitor is made to take a bath. In the first years this was often not so simple a matter as it sounds. There would sometimes come a peasant who required very tactful handling. He understood a bath in the communal bath-house on special occasions, but to have a bath in a small room, in a small bath, and wash in water that is not running ! Why, it was all wrong. It was contrary to everything he had been used to, contrary to all customs and traditions. Besides, why have a bath at all ? It wasn't a special feast day or celebration. On such occasions it required much argument to convince him of the benefit of a bath. If he mistrusted these new-fangled notions of baths, the peasant mistrusted still more the idea of undressing to go to bed, and sleeping between sheets. For one thing, how did he know his precious boots would not be stolen if he left them off ? Again much persuasion before he submitted to these town people, with their curious ideas.

The preliminaries over, he was taken on the following day, with other visitors, round the various rooms in the House, in which are exhibitions dealing with agricultural economy. There are rooms with cleverly arranged exhibits which show him the need for cleaning and sorting grain; others which tell him all about fertilisers; yet others deal with diseases of different crops, their causes and methods of prevention. There are rooms given over to fruit and vegetable culture, to poultry breeding, rabbit breeding, pig breeding, and cattle breeding. A qualified guide conducts the visitors round, explains and answers questions, and impresses the need for collective working for Socialist

agriculture. The health, hygiene, and sanitation room is the last to be visited. This is particularly well arranged, with directness and simplicity. Here the peasant learns about the necessity for sanitation, for personal and social hygiene, the cost of disregarding laws of health and cleanliness, how to deal with existing diseases, and where to obtain help.

There are discussion groups held on any of the innumerable questions connected with agriculture, and general lectures on all kinds of subjects to any who care to listen.

A large hall, with stage, is used as a theatre, cinema, and concert hall. Amateur and professional companies come to perform to the peasants.

The building is an old one adapted to its present purpose, and is therefore in many respects unsatisfactory. In time they will have a new and suitable building. There are separate dormitories for men and women, large, averagely clean, but not very attractive. I expect that in this respect it has improved greatly by now. The dining-room, which also suffered from adaptation, had flowers on the tables, which were covered with American cloth. Meals, which were fairly good, could be obtained at cost price. The use of the club, including the crèche, was free, but all food had to be paid for. The peasant spends at most a week at the House, often only two or three days. Obviously little can be done in the way of education in so short a time. The authorities try to stimulate in the peasant a desire for an improved life, intellectual, social, and economic, and to make him realise that this can only be achieved through education.

One of the most powerful centres of adult education is the Red Army. Very nearly half the conscript's time is spent in education. Every regiment has its school, beginning with primary education for illiterates and continuing through secondary to higher education. The first step is the literacy class. No man leaves the army unable to read and write. Following this are courses designed to give the equivalent of the four-years' primary school. For those who already have this basis there are senior courses which include a foreign language. I was told by the

officers I met that English is now the most popular foreign language. There are courses preparatory for the university and higher technical institutes.

Every soldier is encouraged to write, first for the wall-newspaper and then for the Press. This forms excellent experience in writing, and stimulates reading. A considerable number of men on leaving the army enter the literary field. The army has its own newspapers, journals, and its own authors. All other forms of art expression are encouraged—music, drama, pictorial art, and dancing. The army orchestras are some of the finest in the Union. When, at the end of his training (the vast majority of the conscripts are peasants), the soldier returns to his village, he becomes a potent educational factor among the peasants.

Some of the finest clubs in the U.S.S.R. belong to the Red Army. Let me describe the one in Kharkov where I spent some time. On one occasion I visited the club on the weekly holiday. The building is new, in the best modern Kharkov style. All the rooms are large, lofty, and well lighted. The theatre stands out by its beauty of design and its very fine lighting. I sat through part of a play which was being given by a visiting company from Leningrad. It was a comedy, and excellent fun. Almost as attractive as the theatre is the children's section: a large play-room, gaily decorated with flowers, plants, an aquarium, and educational toys which should satisfy any child. There is a rest-room where the children sleep after dinner, which is supplied to them, and the usual washing arrangements of the best nursery-infant schools, with towel, toothbrush, etc., for each child.

Besides the theatre there is a fine concert hall, also used for lectures, in which a concert was being given at the time of my visit. The leader of the concert party was (for the U.S.S.R.) an elderly man. In an amusing poem he introduced the various artistes. For himself he apologised. He was not the type that could perform heroic deeds on the industrial or agricultural front. To him fell the lot to entertain, to amuse, to enable the builders of Socialism to spend their leisure fruitfully. Would the audience deny that he too, in his way, was helping to build Socialism?

In a large, lofty, and fairly well equipped gymnasium, where soldiers, officers and men, and their wives take physical exercises together, a class in ballet dancing was proceeding. The pupils were soldiers and soldiers' wives, and the instructress was the mistress of ballet at the Kharkov Opera.

The work of the club is divided into three parts: military affairs, scientific education, and cultural education. One whole floor of this vast building is given up to scientific and military education. For the scientific studies there are a number of well-equipped studies and laboratories. The soldiers' wives attend the courses, which are taken together by both sexes. Here, as elsewhere, the aim is to raise the educational level of all the people, not merely of one section. Incidentally, this learning together makes for a better relationship between husband and wife.

Military affairs include every aspect of training for defence. There is a large, well-arranged museum in connection with this.

Science courses include all the sciences as well as technical education. Just at the time when I was in the U.S.S.R.—spring 1984—there was a great drive to equip every citizen with the “technical minimum”—that is, elementary proficiency at his job. Hence the special emphasis in all adult education on technical training.

Cultural education includes languages, music, instrumental and vocal, drama, art, literature, general lectures, dancing and ballet classes. There is the inevitable wall-newspaper, with its editorial committee elected from members of the club. Languages hold a very important place in cultural education. There were 600 officers and men in the club learning languages, chiefly English.

A very large hall is used for periodic exhibitions. During my visit an exhibition of Kharkov life and industry was in progress, to educate the city's inhabitants. A very fine library, with the latest word in fixtures in very attractive wood, lofty, with one whole side glass, comfortable chairs and tables, offered pleasant facilities for the student or the mere reader. The library

has 75,000 volumes and 250 magazines. Books may be read there or borrowed. Authors recommended included Shakespeare, Gorki, Zola, Chekhov, Romain Rolland, Barbusse, Tolstoy, Goethe, etc.

The club has a very good dining-room, served by a well-equipped modern kitchen.

I must not forget the chess-room, one of the most popular rooms in the club. Here men and officers were playing chess together. Outside military duties there is no recognition of rank. Until I learnt to distinguish the different tabs, it was frequently impossible for me to tell which was officer and which was private. Equally, there is no division between the army and the populace. The public is admitted to the club theatre on payment. The various regiments are closely connected with either factory or farm through the system of patronage.

I spent several hours in the club, and talked with many men and officers. One of these told me that he went into the army a peasant lad, liked it so much that on completing his period of training he joined the standing army, attended various classes, and became an officer. His wife, who was well dressed (I noticed all the wives were well dressed), had also come from the village. Until quite recently she was religious. Now, she told me, she had been educated out of it, and realised it was only superstition, to which, like drink, the uneducated still clung.

The strongest impression of that club was a deep, satisfying friendliness and content, as though the mind and body and emotions had been welded into a harmonious whole. Their struggles now were against nature and external conditions, not against themselves.

Mention must be made of the prisons—or houses of correction, as they are called—as centres of adult education. All illiterate prisoners have to attend literacy classes. For the semi-literate there are other classes. There are technical classes for training in the industry carried on in the prison factory. General education here, too, takes the form of circles. The literacy circle is held to be the most important. It is here that the men and

women gain their first desire for reading, here that they find the opportunity for discussion and debate, and thus learn to express themselves. The wall-newspaper is run by the inmates, and all contributors are prisoners. The music circle is generally the most popular; it will include a choir and orchestra, wireless and gramophone. The dramatic circle, where drama is studied as well as performed, is a close runner-up. Very frequently there is an art circle and a dance circle, and always there is a political circle. The warders' sons or daughters join these arts circles on an equal footing with the prisoners. The instructors sometimes come from outside; sometimes they are prisoners. A library is an essential part of prison equipment. In some places they are very good, in others still poor.

When the prisoner has finished his work he is free to indulge in any of the activities that may attract him, or he may attend any of the general lectures which are given in the club, or in the open prisons in their theatre. Self-government plays an important rôle in the social education of the prisoners.

A very important branch of adult education is that covered by the term technical. There are many channels through which this is carried on. Probably first in importance now are the evening universities. There are different types of these, some giving general education, some general scientific, and others specialised.

The Kharkov Evening Institute was in 1932 giving general scientific education. The economic situation, however, demanded more highly qualified engineers. The institute responded to the need. It is now known as "The Institute for Raising the Qualifications of Engineers." The purpose of the institute is to improve the qualifications of the workers without taking them away from industry. The men and women come after a seven-hours' day in the factory, having observed an interval for rest, food, and change. It is not claimed that this is ideal, but production is still far behind demand, and industry cannot spare any workers. At this stage all students before entering the institute must have received seven years' education, or the

equivalent through other than school channels. Workers with elementary skill are taken and trained first as technicians and then as engineers. Under present conditions eight years' study is required for a fully qualified engineer.

Students work four academic hours a day, and 600 hours during the year. Because of the nature of the institute, very little work is given the students to do at home. The syllabus is almost entirely covered by the work in the institute.

In 1984 the students in the institute were of varying nationalities, ages, and factory experience. The ages ranged from twenty-five to fifty; 25 per cent were about twenty-five years of age, 80 per cent were about thirty years, and 45 per cent were over thirty. Ninety per cent had five or more years' factory experience. The nationalities were divided, as 48 per cent Ukrainians, 25 per cent Jews, 24 per cent Russians, and the remainder from various minorities. Politically, non-Party students were in a majority, being 60 per cent. Only 20 per cent were members of the Party, and 20 per cent members of the Komsomol.

The institute is very well equipped with large, up-to-date laboratories. It has a library of 50,000 volumes. There are the usual social facilities of all educational institutions, dining-room, club-room, theatre, etc., and the usual social activities, including wall-newspapers.

Nearly all universities and higher technical institutes have courses for extra-mural students. In 1982, when I was there, the Leningrad State University had 1,000 such students. It had also several thousand correspondence students. Correspondence courses play an important part in adult education. There are special institutes which carry on research work into education by correspondence.

It is not yet possible to organise full-length courses for all workers. Nearly all factories, therefore, organise short courses in the factory. Workers are encouraged to attend these, and are given the time off, with full pay. Some factories give six hours in ten days, others three hours in four days, according to factory



conditions. These courses are generally for the unskilled and semi-literate, and include language and social science as well as technical training.

Finally there are the rabfacs, or workers' faculties. They are educational courses organised by different educational institutes and bodies, designed to prepare factory workers for the entrance examination to the universities and higher technical institutes. When education was brought within the reach of all workers, it included higher education. It was particularly urgent that workers should enter higher educational and technical institutes and train for positions of trust and responsibility. The pre-revolutionary intelligentsia could frequently not be trusted. Unfortunately, many of the workers whom intelligence had made capable of benefiting from higher education were unable to do so because under the Tsarist régime they had received no more than two years' education; many were either semi-literate or wholly illiterate. Hence the organisation of rabfacs, for which much credit is due to the Komsomol. At first illiterate and semi-literate students were accepted. Very many found the course too difficult and dropped out half-way. Many completed the course at a cost of great nervous strain. With the improvement of general conditions the work has become much easier. All entrants to the rabfacs are now required to have completed a seven years' school. This means that the course, which lasts from three to four years, is much less crowded, and the pace at which the work is taken does not involve a great strain on the workers. Some of the institutions hold these courses in the evenings, so that working time is not curtailed. Others arrange for three months' alternate work and study. The syllabus covers general subjects, and includes a foreign language and social science. There are special rabfacs for preparing workers for music and art institutes. Similar facilities for entering higher education and technical institutes are provided for the peasant worker. These rabfacs provide unlimited possibilities to all workers for higher education in the arts and the sciences. Provided he or she has the requisite educational qualifications,

**a worker can enter a rabfac at any time up to thirty-five years of age, and there qualify for training as a specialist in any sphere of life. No worker is eternally condemned to the bench through financial disability. All this adult education is free.**

## CHAPTER XVII

### *Octobrists, Pioneers, and Komsomols*

LONG before the Revolution, Lenin recognised the necessity for organising youth for Communism. Under the Tsarist régime, youth organisations such as Boy Scouts were forbidden, until 1905, as dangerous and revolutionary. After the 1905 Revolution, when the Tsar purported to carry out certain Liberal reforms, permission for the formation of Boy Scout troops was granted. The Russian Liberals eagerly availed themselves of this opportunity, and a number of troops were organised. The real revolutionaries would have nothing to do with this movement, considering it a bulwark of capitalism.

During the Revolution and the Civil War that followed, many youths and girls organised themselves into small groups for aiding the Revolution. They acted as scouts and messengers. In their courage and daring they rendered invaluable service to the Red Army. The Civil War over, many political leaders turned their minds to the organisation of youth. Those who were still hoping for the defeat of the Bolsheviks set about organising groups very much on the lines of the Scout movement, and for a long time used them for anti-Bolshevik propaganda. The supporters of the Bolsheviks organised their children loosely into a youth organisation known as Youks.<sup>1</sup> When the anti-Bolshevik youth groups were disbanded they went over in a body to Youks and carried on their disruptive work there. Very soon it was obvious to the Communists that this was a very unsatisfactory organisation, and it too was disbanded. Out of its ashes arose the Pioneers and, for the very young, the Octobrists. The Young Communist League, or Komsomol, was formed much earlier; it took its share in the October Revolution.

All these organisations are Communist, political, and propagandist. Lenin gave much time and thought to the youth

<sup>1</sup> Young Communists.

movements. Some of his finest addresses were given to the Komsomol. Like Lenin, the Party realised that the fulfilment of their aims lay in the hands of youth, and its organisation and upbringing played a large part in their deliberations.

*The Young Communist League.* The age limits for membership for this are fourteen and twenty-three. As Party membership begins at eighteen, it means that some of the members of the Komsomol are at the same time members of the Communist Party. This enables the Party to have more direct control over the Komsomol. The duty of watching over the Young Communist League is actually delegated to Party members, who are also members of the Y.C.L. Admission to the Y.C.L. is simple for a son or daughter of a peasant or worker. Should the applicant for admission belong to the class of office employees, then he requires the recommendation of two Komsomols of two years' standing, and of a Party member of three years' standing. Children of kulak or bourgeois origin are dealt with individually. After acceptance there is a probationary period up to eighteen months. A Komsomol must attain political literacy—that is, have a knowledge of dialectical materialism, of Marxist economics, etc.—within three years of election to membership. If he fails to satisfy the committee at the end of the period he is not accepted. He or she can be expelled for “conduct unbecoming to a Komsomol,” such as drunkenness, obscenity, etc., or for persistent refusal to pay dues. The Komsomol must be anti-religious. Members are expected to keep themselves physically fit for labour and for defence of the country. They must be ready to help in all campaigns for the improvement of the country. At a recent congress (1985) it was decided that there was no longer the need to use the Komsomol in all kinds of industrial campaigns. It was agreed to concentrate on the education of the Komsomol.

The National Komsomol Congress, held annually, elects the central executive committee, which meets five or six times a year. The committee elects sub-committees, which meet weekly.

The Komsomol is considered as the guardian of Communist principles, as the advance-guard of Communism. Whenever, at a given point, the struggle became acute, the Komsomol entered the fight and the victory was assured. It took the whole of life under its province. When, soon after the Revolution, the question of training skilled workers arose, it was the Komsomol which carried out a successful campaign for factory apprentice schools, where boys and girls with only two years' schooling could be trained. It was the Komsomol which helped to organise the rabfacs, an institution which has supplied the country with a wealth of technical and intellectual power. Polytechnisation was made a reality by the activities of the Komsomol in their campaign of 1928. The members threw themselves with enthusiasm into the solution of the illiteracy problem and the drink evil. They gave up their weekly holiday, their free time, their yearly holiday, to help with the harvest, to help fulfil an order in a factory, to plant trees, to build the Moscow Underground. Wherever there was urgent need or danger, Komsomol volunteers were to be found.

The Komsomol works particularly with the Red Army, the Navy, and the Air Force. The members carry on all kinds of political and social propaganda among the recruits. They send them papers, journals, and books, arrange evenings for them, and try generally to make them politically literate. They are no respecters of persons or traditions. Their goal is the building of the Communist society, and, with a clear vision and a youthful, joyous enthusiasm, they march to their goal, never recking of obstacles in their way.

*The Pioneers* were organised in 1922. They are the children of the Komsomol. They receive their stimulus, their direction, their help, and their instruction from the Komsomol. It is the latter which makes the Pioneers realise their importance in the scheme of things, the great need the country has of them. The Komsomol calls out all their youthful enthusiasm and idealism. And they answer the call in the same way as their elder brothers

the Komsomols do. There has been no task in the past to which the Pioneers have not set their hands. As the conditions of the country are improving, so the calls made on them are decreasing. They were much too great until 1932, and many children paid the price in nervous exhaustion and sub-normal health.

The success of the campaign against drunkenness owes as much to the Pioneers as to the Komsomol. They, too, played a very important part in the fight against illiteracy. From an address by Lenin to the Komsomol, a whole set of precepts, called the "Precepts of Ilyich" (Lenin), was taken to form the basis of the Pioneers' conduct. They form the Guide for Pioneers. It may interest readers to learn some of them. "The whole task of Communists is to know how to convince the backward, to work among them, and not to fence themselves off from them. To learn to work—this is the task in its full scope, which the Soviet authority must put before its people. . . . Less fervent slogans, and more simple everyday work.

"The real task of building the Communist society confronts the youth of to-day.

"Without productive work and actual struggle a book knowledge of Communism acquired from Communist pamphlets and writing is worth absolutely nothing.

"You would make a great mistake if you were to draw the conclusion that it is possible to become a Communist without having absorbed what has been accumulated by the mind of man."

Pioneers are admitted between the ages of ten and sixteen. As the enrolment age to the Komsomol is fourteen, it means that many Pioneers are members of both organisations, in the same way that many Komsomols are also Party members. These Pioneers who are also Komsomols are thus under the influence and direction of the senior organisation. This direction is passed on to the young Pioneers, who naturally look up to the older members. Enrolment is a great occasion. It usually takes place on an anniversary celebration in the presence of the Pioneer brigade, a representative from the Komsomol, and one from the

Party. The room or hall in which the ceremony takes place is gaily decorated. Parents and workers from the factory to which the aspirants' school is attached may be present. There is an excitement and a thrill in the air. The speeches that would bore other children are listened to here with apparent interest. The great moment comes. The aspiring Pioneer takes the oath: "I, a young Pioneer of the Soviet Union, in the presence of my comrades solemnly promise that I will firmly defend the cause of the working classes in the struggle for the liberation of the workers and peasants of the world, and that I will honourably and unfalteringly carry out the Covenant of Lenin and the laws and customs of a Pioneer." The challenge is then given: "For the struggle of the workers' cause be ready." Firmly he replies, "Always ready." The Pioneer slogan is then repeated: "Relief follows relief." The red kerchief is then fixed on to his blouse and he goes forth into life with a greater realisation of his duties as a builder of a Communist society. The solemnity and the importance soon wear off for many of the younger Pioneers, and they are by no means so angelic as it might be feared. But something remains, even with the most scatter-brained—the beginnings of the feeling of collective responsibility, the first realisation of his constructive power to be used for the good of the community, of the esteem with which his elders regard him. All this gives him a better chance of growing up into a harmonious human being.

The laws and customs of the Pioneers are not without interest. *Laws*.—(1) The Pioneer is true to the cause of the working class and to the Covenant of Lenin. (2) The Pioneer is the younger brother and helper of the Komsomol and the Party. (3) The Pioneer is a comrade to Pioneers and to the workers' and peasants' children of the world. (4) The Pioneer organises the surrounding children and participates with them in the life they live. The Pioneer is an example to all children. (5) The Pioneer strives for knowledge. Knowledge and skill are power in the struggle for the workers' cause. *Customs*.—(1) The Pioneer protects his own health and the health of others. He is tolerant

and cheerful. He rises early and does his morning exercises. (2) The Pioneer economises his own and other people's time. He does his job quickly and promptly. (3) The Pioneer is industrious and persevering, can work collectively under any conditions, and finds the way over obstacles. (4) The Pioneer is careful with other people's property, is careful with his own books and clothes, and with workshop equipment. (5) The Pioneer does not swear nor drink nor smoke.

The Pioneers are organised in the schools, where they have their Base. The largest unit consists of forty to fifty members and is called a Brigade. The Brigade leader is also a Young Communist. Each Brigade is divided up into Links of ten, whose leader is selected by his Link. There is a Brigade council which consists of the Link leaders, the Brigade leader, and a representative of the Komsomol Bureau of the Base. The Brigades adopt the names of the revolutionary leaders, while the Links use names of tools or machines used in industry or agriculture. The school Pioneers form a Detachment with a Komsomol as leader.

The dress is generally a white shirt, with a red scarf knotted round the neck, blue knickers, for boys; a white blouse, blue skirt, and red kerchief for girls. Each Detachment is free to choose its own uniform. There is no separation of the sexes in any organisation of children or youth. The badge is the Red Flag with the hammer and sickle and a camp-fire of five logs and three flames.

One of the many duties of the Pioneers is to organise the *Octobrists*. This is the first organisation of children. All children between the ages of eight and eleven are eligible. Once again the system of interlocking organisations is evident. Since admission to the Pioneers is possible at the age of ten, there are Octobrists who are also Pioneers. The Octobrists are organised into groups of twenty-five, with a Komsomol as leader. Each group is organised into five Links, with a Pioneer as Link leader. The group leader is elected by the Komsomol to which the Pioneer unit is attached. The Link elects an assistant leader to work



with the Pioneer and Komsomol leaders. The badge is a red star sewn on the shirt or blouse and worn over the heart.

Camping under canvas is as yet rarely practised in the Soviet Union. It was actually forbidden by the Commissariats of Health and Education, lest the zeal of the inexperienced lead to more harm than good.<sup>1</sup> The summer camps include buildings for sleeping and eating, and cooking is done by a cook. All the other activities take place out of doors. They are very varied and include all the arts; much time is given to singing, dancing, orchestral music, nature-study, politics, athletics, exploration, and camp-fires.

No particular attention is paid to sex. Sleeping accommodation is separate, but in the same building. All other activities are carried out jointly. A Brigade leader may just as often be a girl Young Communist. It apparently does not militate against discipline.

<sup>1</sup> It is now being adopted (1986).

## CHAPTER XVIII

### *Other Educational Institutions I Visited*

It would require a book to describe all the educational institutions that I visited. Space will only permit me to tell of two or three that I consider more interesting, not necessarily the best.

. . . . .

*The Children's Home for Deaf and Dumb in the name of N. Raou.* I am not a specialist in the education of the physically or mentally defective, but I had been asked to obtain some information on the teaching of the deaf and dumb. I decided that the best way to do this was to visit some institutions. Apparently this was rarely done. It took me some time to hear of a school, and a considerable time to find it once I set forth.

The Soviet authorities are apparently so busy training the normal children that, at any rate in this instance, they have, if not forgotten, at least temporarily put on one side the training of the deaf and dumb. I hope this will catch the eye of those in high places and make them give a little more attention and help to the Deaf and Dumb Young Children's Home and to the School for Deaf and Dumb in Donskaya Street in Moscow. It is the least reward that can be given to that remarkable woman, Natalie Raou, the head of the Children's Home for Deaf and Dumb. Her whole life is an example of amazing enthusiasm for, and devotion and sacrifice to, the cause of deaf and dumb little children. I have rarely been in an atmosphere in which a healthy, vigorous, joyous affection was so evident. No stranger seeing these two-, three-, or four-year-old children would imagine for a moment that they had been afflicted from birth with this double disability. They were radiant and looked intelligent, much more so than many normal children. Let not the reader imagine that I was unduly carried away. Nothing that I may say can do adequate justice to the work of Natalie Raou.

She was the pioneer of schools for deaf and dumb children under eight. Her work began long before the Revolution. Her experiences during the early period, when it was considered essential to have Communist directors of schools, even though their qualifications were sometimes that of a cook or kitchen-maid, would make amusing reading now, though at the time it must have been heart-breaking.

The home, which is residential, is situated in a workers' district near the Amo factory. Up to July 1984 the school had no contacts with the life outside. The attempts to persuade the Amo factory to take patronage over the school have so far proved abortive. Worse than that, the factory took away a piece of the gardens belonging to the school, and attempted to take away the whole of it. The home is attached to the local committee of the District Deaf and Dumb Institute. It is supported by the Lenin Borough<sup>1</sup> Education Authority, and receives a sum up to 800 roubles a month from the parents as payment for food.

The building is of wood, of one storey, such as was common for homes among well-to-do peasants. Owing to the action of the Amo factory, there is little space for outdoor activities. A hut for the technical workers (cook, maids), laundry, shed, and barn have been erected in the gardens. Flowers and some vegetables are cultivated, the children helping with this work. There are seven rooms, a kitchen, and other offices. The house is very light and extraordinarily clean. The cleanliness was staggering. I learnt that it was the chief pride of the house-keeper, who cooks and cleans.

Of the seven rooms, one is an isolation-room, three are bedrooms, two are class-rooms, and one room is for the head, which also serves as the office. Both class and sleeping accommodation are inadequate. There is no separate workroom for manual work, which Natalie Raou considers essential. The equipment generally is very poor. There is a shortage of coloured pencils—"the children's speech"—paper, books, blunt-edged scissors, hammers, saws, etc., and a lack of didactic apparatus, which has

<sup>1</sup> Lenin Borough is a district in Moscow.

to be made by the teachers. Wistfully Natalie Raou said she would like to have a sufficiency of play and work material, a nature-corner with living specimens, soft furniture, etc., but these at present were dreams. There is a piano, which is fully used.

The home has thirty-three children between the ages of two and five. The five-year group is an experiment. Natalie Raou insists that to change from this home to the older home at the age of four is bad psychologically for the children. Experience has shown that progress is not only retarded by the change, but that the children actually go back. She insists that they should stay in the same home until seven. Hence the experiment of the five-year group.

The complete staff consists of thirteen people. The head also acts as secretary, keeps accounts, and is director of methods and psychological work. There are eight teachers and four technical workers. There are no Party members among the staff. A doctor and unqualified assistant visit the school daily. Twice a year the children are examined by a specialist for throat, nose, and ears, and the speech development is measured. Staff meetings are held not less than once a month. Besides these there are discussions on methods and psychology, time-tables, etc. The staff is divided into three sections. The first is the administrative-economic, which concerns itself with general conditions, such as equipment, food, sanitation, heating and lighting, servants, and medical aid. The second is a pedagogical section, which concerns itself with matters purely educational, as well as social-political work with the children. The third group, the social one, has charge of the improvement of the staff and social and professional-union contacts.

The school day is divided into two, the morning being given up to language and to extending the children's horizon. After the midday sleep the occupations are of the nature of club work, games, manual work, dancing, etc., all of which is closely correlated to the morning work. In the summer, work and play are carried on out of doors. All their experiences, all that they see, are written down for use in the winter in speech development.

Natalie Raou explained her aims as fourfold. First, to develop the methods and to show the possibility, of training deaf and dumb children to accustom themselves to verbal thinking and to spontaneous speech, using a natural method based on the speech development of the normal child. The second aim was to find out the best aids to making speech automatic and to strengthening the speech material already acquired. Next she considered it essential to carry on in the home scientific research work, by observation of the speech behaviour of the children, and to find out the words of primary necessity for each age in order to prepare a textbook of instructions for the training of verbal speech for the deaf and dumb pre-school child. Finally she considers that the development of speech is not an end in itself, but a means of developing the personality of the deaf and dumb child as a member of a collective.

The methods for general education are those used in the ordinary nursery-infant school, with more time spent on rhythmic work. The special methods are applied to speech development. They are based on the natural development of speech in the normal child. Thus the first sounds taught to these children are the first sounds made by a baby with its lips and throat, which are the reflex action to external stimuli. When a baby first sees a dog he says nothing until he hears it bark, then he repeats the sound "wow, wow." Thereafter for some time a dog is "wow, wow." Similarly a train may be "cha, cha" or "puff, puff," even long after it has been given the correct name. The deaf and dumb children in the home are first of all taught these sounds or "activity" names. In the same way they are taught verbs before nouns, the action always preceding the word, and then the nouns which can be affected by these verbs. Thanks to this method, the children apparently quickly realise the value of verbal speech, and willingly and spontaneously produce the sounds in the corresponding situation. Some of the children I spoke to certainly gave strong support of the excellence of the method. Thus, whenever they see a dog, they produce the sound "wow, wow." From this stage they pass over

easily, as the normal child does, to the correct name. As soon as this stage is reached, the word is illustrated on a card which is hung up on the wall. It is then used in the lotto word game and in dramatic work. Every new word learnt is dramatised. The connection of verbs and nouns is illustrated by pictures. For example, the verb "to put down," which is one word in Russian, is printed at the head of a card. Underneath are pictures of a number of articles that can be put down, with the names at the side. When the children have actually performed the action and learnt the nouns, the card is put up on the wall. Natalie Raou considers that it is very confusing to the young children to have up words which they do not yet know. She uses the wall as an aid to perfecting their knowledge and to fixing it permanently on their memory. From the old material, the teachers are continually developing new material. This work of preparing suitable material takes up much time.

The staff is generally overburdened, and this hinders it from carrying on the research work considered necessary. In spite of this, much valuable information is being collected. Both morning and afternoon, teachers keep a complete record of the children's daily development and behaviour. The children are also carefully observed when they are out of doors, so that a record of their interests and characteristics may be made.

The relations between the parents and the home are very friendly. There are frequent periodic discussions, when short talks are given to the parents on the bringing up of deaf and dumb children.

Discussing the question of day and boarding institutions for the very young deaf and dumb children, Natalie Raou said the objection to the boarding type was that it limited the children's experience and environment. On the other hand, deaf and dumb children required a training and education which should embrace the whole of the child's time, and the parents were not capable of giving such education. Then, too, the daily leave-taking from the mother for a two- or three-year-old child was very disturbing psychologically, the disturbance being greater

for an afflicted child than for a normal child because of its greater dependence. This disturbance persisted for some time, so that the child could not concentrate on learning. For the education of speech it was imperative that the child should feel secure and happy, and that it should be able to concentrate. She considers day schools are suitable, and possibly better, for children over seven.

There is no special international or anti-religious work carried on here, as it is considered that the children are too young for that. But all the apparatus used, the pictures, illustrations, the words taught, naturally reflect the political and anti-religious views of the country.

*The School for Deaf and Dumb in the name of Professor Raou.* The school, which is also residential, is only a few minutes from the Children's Home. Here Professor Raou, the husband of Natalie Raou, carries on his research work. The whole family is engaged in this work, the younger members continuing the work begun by their parents.

The director of the school is a Party man, and there is also a school head master. I was able to see very little on my first visit, so I came again, bringing a negro friend. We had not been very long in the school before the news spread that there were visitors from abroad, one from England, and, much more thrilling, a negro girl from America. A sense of excitement made itself felt immediately. The head master explained to us that visitors were very rare, particularly foreign ones. As far as he could remember, they had only had two from abroad, one from Germany and the other from Japan. He said he was honoured that foreign guests should be interested in the school. On leaving his room to be shown round the school, we were met by one of the staff with a group of children. She explained that the whole school was very excited, that it was almost impossible to continue lessons, and that the pupils were all asking for a meeting for the visitors to address them. A short discussion was held and the head decided to abandon lessons for those over twelve

and to have a meeting after we had been shown the school. He was not permitted to show us much. The older girls took hold of our arms, waists, or wherever possible, and led us off to show us their sleeping accommodation and other things they considered more interesting than class-rooms. The protests of the Head were of no avail, since we were willing victims. Here again one was quite unconscious of the disabilities from which these boys and girls suffered. Here too was an atmosphere of joyful activity, kindness, and understanding. For us it was delightful to be so immediately accepted as friends and equals.

The domestic arrangements all showed great attention to cleanliness, but they also showed decided poverty. The girls' dormitory was furnished with the bare minimum, and no trace of beauty. The Head apologised for their poverty. They had received very little help so far from any organisation, but he was expecting an improvement in this respect.

Meanwhile, the pupils had been collected in the hall. When we arrived we were greeted by tremendous clapping. Then we were bombarded with questions about our countries, on every conceivable topic—the conditions of the workers, wages, unemployment, colonial policy, current events, when we would have our revolution, etc., etc. Most of the questions were addressed to my negro friend. She evoked considerably more interest than I did. My translations in Russian were repeated by the teacher to the pupils. They could all lip-read, and many of them understood me. The eagerness, the intelligence, and the enthusiasm for life shown by these boys and girls was amazing. The Head finally took pity on us and closed the meeting, with greetings from the pupils to the deaf and dumb children of England and America.

The Pioneer leader, a very attractive girl of seventeen, whispered to the Head that they would like to invite us to lunch. The Head was not at all sure that their lunch was suitable for foreign visitors. We quickly decided that it was. The hubbub and the noise quietened down in the dining-room to a normal amount of sound, again giving one the impression that one was amongst normal children. In the dining-room we were the cause



of further discussion among the table and kitchen monitors. Could visitors, and foreign visitors at that, be served with soup from the pan in which it had been cooked? (It was the custom to place the pan on the table and serve from it.) It was decided in the negative, and our soup was brought to us in china plates from the kitchen. The rest used enamel plates. The soup was very good and plentiful, eaten with much bread. This was followed by semolina pudding, with half a pint of milk for each. Anyone could have a second helping. The Head explained that so far their supplies were very poor. They only had meat twice a week, and vegetables were very scarce. They were making great efforts to obtain more help from their patrons. In spite of the food difficulties, they all looked remarkably healthy. By now, with the general improvement of the food situation, the position in the school will be greatly improved. We ate at long tables covered with American cloth. This was the only dining-room that I visited in which there were no plants or flowers on the table.

The school had, in May 1934, 478 pupils, of both sexes, from eight to nineteen years. The aim "is to prepare useful citizens for a Socialist society." They receive a general education which goes a little beyond the ordinary primary school. In technical education they reach the standard of the factory apprentice school, more attention naturally being given to technical work.

The methods used are a development of those used in the Children's Home. They discourage mimicry, and officially the deaf and dumb alphabet is forbidden; the children, however, among themselves resort to both. In 1931 the question was raised of going back to mimicry because the standard of attainment was so low. However, it was finally decided against. There is much emotional education through physical culture and the various art circles. Numbers in the classes vary from six to ten and, for the older pupils, twelve. I was told that they fitted in well with the normal life after leaving the school. There are special factories which take groups of the pupils from the school and have made the necessary adaptations. The boys from this

school make excellent carpenters, earning very good wages. The school has its own workshops, including a printing press, where practical work is done. Of those who leave the school 50 per cent learn to speak well, 25 per cent indistinctly, and 25 per cent very indistinctly. So far, in this school, electrical apparatus, such as was employed in Leningrad, was not in use.

Politically and socially the pupils work very well. There is much self-government and it appears successful. There is a branch of Mopr (International Labour Defence Organisation), of the Young Naturalists, and of Osoaviakhim (Society for Chemical and Air Defence).

All teachers in the deaf and dumb school are required to have a university training. The Boubnov Institute of Education, in Moscow, and the Herzen Institute, in Leningrad, have special departments for training these. It is a four-year course and includes, besides general subjects, education in medicine, psychopathology and neurology. These special subjects take about 10 per cent of the time. The salary is as for secondary-school teachers. For the pension, one year counts as two, so that after twelve years' service a teacher may continue to work and receive salary and pension. Teachers work three hours a day and seventy-five hours a month. They receive two months' holiday in the summer. In the winter and spring holidays, like other teachers, they have to attend courses and conferences and prepare their work. Many of the children who come from collective farms go home four weeks earlier in the summer term to help with the harvest, so that their teachers get this extra holiday.

The school has a studies cabinet where research-work in apparatus and tests is being carried on, and where records and observation tests are analysed and reports drawn up with the help of the school psychologist and a mistress of methods.

*The Pioneer Commune for Orphans, Moscow.* The commune was organised in 1924 for orphan children. It began with twenty and now has fifty-five children (thirty-four girls and twenty-one boys), between the ages of twelve and sixteen years.

We were received by the Pioneer leader, a young Komsomol whom I met two years before, when he was still a pupil and chairman of the commune. Now he has left, but retains contact by his leadership of the Pioneer Detachment. Just as two years before, so now, he gave us a remarkably lucid account of the working of the commune, answering all our questions intelligently and frankly.

The aim of the commune is to train these children, who have each lost one or both parents, to be responsible citizens of the U.S.S.R. To prove that the aim was being fulfilled, he told us that 185 children who had been brought up by the commune were now Pioneers. Some of those who had left had become engineers, teachers, etc. Not one had been a failure.

The commune is entirely self-governing, but financed by the Government. There is a staff of two adults for cooking and part housekeeping and a Director, who is a woman. All the rest of the work is done by the children. They are divided into four brigades, which are in charge of cleaning, clothes, food and leisure, and cultural life respectively. In order that every child may have experience of every kind of work, the brigades are changed periodically. They actually help with the financial management, with planning quantities of food, clothing, and expenditure. Some of the children receive money from friends or relatives who visit them. This, provided it is a reasonable amount, they are allowed to keep, the reasonableness being decided by the pupils' committee. Except for that and a few personal belongings, there is no private property. There is no institution uniform; the children looked very neat in ordinary clothes.

The discipline is entirely in the hands of the children. The tradition already established and the prestige of the Pioneers are sufficient to ensure normal behaviour. The older children undertake responsibility for the newcomers. Should any dispute arise among the children which their own committee is unable to settle, the Borough Pioneer Bureau is called in to arbitrate.

The leisure occupations are similar to those in schools; a dramatic circle which is very popular, an art circle which showed

some very promising work, music and literary circles, as well as construction circles, afford facilities for free time. The children attend cinemas and children's theatres free.

There is close contact with life outside. The commune is attached to the Hammer and Sickle metallurgical factory. This supports the commune with grants for extra expenditure, supplies it with specially needed equipment, and so on. In return, the commune helps to improve the output of the factory and the cultural life of the workers. The Pioneers interview slack factory-workers and talk to them. They organise Socialist agreements and Socialist competition with the factory and with individual workers. They take part in its anti-drink and political campaigns. They produce sketches during the lunch-hour, designed to shame the absentee and the drunkard, and to encourage the conscientious worker, or sometimes merely to improve their cultural level. They arrange reading evenings for the workers.

The children attend the ordinary school in the neighbourhood. Because they are very politically conscious they play an important rôle in school discipline and are found to be very helpful with unruly children. There is much political work carried on in the commune, and there is no doubt that these children will grow up enthusiastic supporters of the Socialist régime. Stalin's speech at the Seventeenth Party Congress was used as the basis for much political work and supplied the themes for the whole wall-newspaper of that month. All political anniversaries and current political events are discussed, and stimulate the art, dramatic, and literary work of their leisure. The commune is often visited by well-known leaders and addressed by them.

The day is planned in detail. They rise at 7 a.m. and do physical jerks. The next hour is given up to breakfast, washing up, and tidying up rooms. From 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. they are at the school, which is very close at hand. At 12 noon at school they all have free dinner. On arrival at the commune after 2 p.m. they have another dinner, followed by clearing away and washing up. From 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. is free time, and from

4 p.m. to 5 p.m. they perform social duties; from 5.30 p.m. to 7.30 p.m. there is school preparation; 7.30 p.m. to 8 p.m. is supper, and from 8 p.m. to 9 p.m. is again free time. At 9 p.m. a report is received by the whole commune, from brigade leaders and others, on the day's work. This is criticised severely when necessary. At 9.30 p.m. they go to bed. There is the usual six-day week. In the summer they go to camp for two months.

They seemed to be very well fed. Breakfast consisted of tea and bread and butter; the school dinner of soup, meat, and fruit or pudding; the second dinner of meat or fish or other savoury, and fresh or stewed fruit; supper of porridge, milk and bread. All the children looked very well, and had that eager, purposive, contented appearance which is so common in the schools of the U.S.S.R.

The building was once a wealthy merchant's house and, with some adaptations, served the purpose well. There was a very pleasant assembly hall, and a large room given up to the children's leisure activities, as well as a workroom for manual work. The dormitories were very clean but unattractive. The whole place gave evidence of great attention to cleanliness.

The children sang for us in another hall, but the singing was not very good. This was followed by questions to us, the questions one had come to expect from Soviet children. The visit of my party coincided with the rescue of the marooned *Chelyuskin* Expedition. One bright young spark asked, "Did the school-children in England know anything about the *Chelyuskin* Expedition?" Fortunately for our country's good name, one of the English teachers had told his boys about it and had cuttings and pictures dealing with it put up in the class-room. Their questions were only put an end to by the fact that we had another appointment.

*The Forest School.* Prophylactics play a great part in Soviet life. Always, wherever possible, the authorities try to prevent illness and disease. In accordance with this policy there have been organised a chain of forest schools outside the big towns

wherever there are forests. To these are sent weak school-children of from eight to sixteen years of age. They are selected by the dispensary commission of the district, after recommendation by the school doctor. They stay from six to eight weeks, live an outdoor life, and receive extra nourishment.

Moscow had, in 1934, fourteen such forest schools; that which I visited was for tubercular children. It is situated in the forest at forty-five minutes' drive from Moscow, so that the parents are easily able to visit the children once a month. The building was formerly the summer residence of a wealthy Moscow inhabitant and required little reconstruction to adapt it for its new purpose. There had to be additions for bedrooms and a dining-room. The very large grounds supply the school with vegetables, fruit, eggs, poultry and milk, and, of course, pigs are kept. The keeping of pigs is almost a sign of being a good Communist at this period when there is still a shortage of cattle.

There were 120 children, between the ages of eight and twelve years, divided into four groups of two parallel classes. When the children first come they are restless at night, but they improve very quickly in this respect as in all ways. There are a resident doctor and two nurses, and a visiting child-psychologist attends weekly. The singing-mistress is also visiting. At night a teacher is on duty, as well as a nurse. The sleeping accommodation seemed overcrowded, and the Director acknowledged the need for more space. There was ample classroom accommodation, a large hall, as well as the dining-room. All the rooms are very light, airy, and spacious.

Self-government is practised here. There is a children's committee which is responsible for school work, another for orderliness, and so on. The work committee helps the more backward children. Shock brigadism, Socialist competition between classes, brigades, staff, and children, and parents and children, are all means of improving discipline and work. The results are recorded on the wall-newspaper.

The relations between the boys and girls are very friendly; sex seemed to be non-existent. Boys and girls are dressed alike,

in knickers and shirts or blouses. All the heads are closely cropped, and for the stranger it is difficult to tell the sex of the child. The Director believes that this solves the problem of sex in the school.

The children all looked very happy and well. Fortunately for me it was the day when the singing-mistress visited. They all sang and danced for me. The singing, again, was poor; but the dancing of the boys and of the girls, was beyond praise. Their bodies were perfectly free and yet under complete control. Movement flowed and rippled through the whole body. There was no consciousness of separate limbs; it was a rhythmic entity. They do traditional and rhythmic dancing.

The school régime differs somewhat from an ordinary school régime. The lessons are shorter and most of the time is spent out of doors. Four lessons of thirty-five minutes each are taken each day. One of these is always out of doors, summer or winter; it may be reading, story-telling, or mental arithmetic. Much time is spent in gardening.

The children rise at 7.15 a.m., wash, make beds, and breakfast at 8.15 a.m., when they have bread and butter, porridge with milk, ham or fish. Then follows medical inspection. At 9.5 a.m. is the first lesson, after which there is a break of ten minutes. After the second lesson there is an interval of twenty minutes, all intervals being spent out of doors. At 12 noon, lessons finish and the children go into the woods for an hour. Dinner, at 1 p.m., consists of three courses: soup; fish or meat, and vegetables; and fruit or pudding. From 2 p.m. to 3.30 p.m. is the "dead hour," when the children sleep out of doors, in winter in sleeping-bags. After the rest comes an hour's walk in the forest, followed at 4.30 p.m. by tea, which consists of bread and butter, cheese, an apple or biscuits, and tea. For an hour after 5 p.m. is club work. This includes physical culture, dancing, singing, modelling, embroidery, and other handicrafts in wood and raffia. I saw some beautiful specimens of work, particularly embroidery. At 6.20 p.m. the children are again in the grounds. Supper is at 7 p.m., consisting of hot potatoes and butter, milk, and biscuits.

Afterwards there is free play until 8 p.m., then washing and bed. At 9 p.m., silence is enforced.

Political work is carried on here as elsewhere. Of the 120 children, 48 formed a Pioneer Detachment, while the remainder were Young Octobrists.





## STATISTICS



## COMPLETE EDUCATIONAL PICTURE

| Illiteracy. Percentage of population  | 1913<br>78%       | 1927-28<br>44% | 1934-35<br>8% |
|---|-------------------|----------------|---------------|
| Pupils in primary, incomplete secondary and secondary schools   | 1914<br>7,800,600 | 11.2 million   | 26 million    |
| Students in higher educational institutions, technicums, rabfacs, factory apprentice schools and professional-technical schools | 290,000           | 650,000        | 2,527,000     |
| Children and adults in educational institutions   | —                 | —              | 50 million    |
| Adults attending improvement courses and circles  | —                 | —              | 10 "          |
| Adults taking correspondence courses  | —                 | —              | 2 "           |
|   |                   | Total          | 62 "          |

These figures are exclusive of those attending Party mass schools—roughly 18 million—and nursery-infant schools—roughly 2 million.

Total population of country, just over 170 million.

In R.S.F.S.R. during the years 1931-34 the number of pupils in primary schools increased by 2.7 million, or 125.5 per cent; in incomplete secondary schools by 1.6 millions, or 307 per cent; and in secondary schools by 150,000, or 858 per cent.

## PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION: NURSERY-INFANT SCHOOLS

In 1914 non-existent except for a few private efforts

| <i>Republics</i>         |      | 1924-25 | 1925-26 | 1926-27 | 1927-28 | 1928-29 | 1929-30 | 1930-31 | 1931-32 | 1932-33   |
|--------------------------|------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-----------|
| U.S.S.R. as a whole      | N.I. | 1,189   | 1,369   | 1,666   | 2,132   | 2,517   | 3,858   | 6,574   | 15,415  | 21,215    |
|                          | C.   | 60,196  | 72,685  | 86,509  | 104,386 | 129,257 | 173,543 | 366,236 | 805,979 | 1,145,800 |
| Urban areas              | N.I. | 986     | 1,139   | 1,362   | 1,941   | 2,215   | 2,910   | 5,289   | 8,586   | 11,185    |
|                          | C.   | 40,915  | 66,064  | 73,128  | 97,305  | 118,342 | 155,859 | 309,110 | 542,354 | 726,200   |
| Rural areas              | N.I. | 203     | 230     | 304     | 191     | 302     | 448     | 1,285   | 6,829   | 10,080    |
|                          | C.   | 10,281  | 10,621  | 13,381  | 7,081   | 10,917  | 17,689  | 57,126  | 263,625 | 419,600   |
| *R.S.F.S.R.              | N.I. | 815     | 1,014   | 1,181   | 1,387   | 1,622   | 2,219   | 4,448   | 11,123  | 14,349    |
|                          | C.   | 41,975  | 52,301  | 60,777  | 71,669  | 85,882  | 115,608 | 244,236 | 565,421 | 800,900   |
| White Russia             | N.I. | 43      | 43      | 71      | 90      | 96      | 116     | 240     | 248     | 376       |
|                          | C.   | 1,873   | 1,886   | 3,424   | 4,311   | 4,738   | 5,605   | 13,151  | 18,923  | 40,000    |
| Ukraine                  | N.I. | 157     | 165     | 221     | 343     | 431     | 484     | 1,021   | 2,139   | 3,035     |
|                          | C.   | 7,426   | 8,696   | 10,477  | 13,397  | 17,260  | 22,445  | 56,148  | 121,465 | 174,200   |
| †Transcaucasian S.F.S.R. | N.I. | 105     | 108     | 122     | 220     | 248     | 406     | 658     | 1,311   | 1,976     |
|                          | C.   | 7,334   | 7,312   | 8,068   | 9,570   | 14,474  | 22,442  | 38,988  | 70,285  | 916,000   |
| Uzbekistan               | N.I. | 11      | 19      | 32      | 52      | 70      | 86      | 125     | 410     | 567       |
|                          | C.   | 881     | 1,166   | 1,780   | 2,675   | 3,904   | 4,599   | 8,045   | 24,739  | 26,600    |
| Tadzhikistan             | N.I. | —       | —       | —       | —       | —       | —       | 8       | 13      | 32        |
|                          | C.   | —       | —       | —       | —       | —       | —       | 384     | 667     | 1,600     |
| Turkistan                | N.I. | 8       | 20      | 39      | 40      | 50      | 47      | 74      | 171     | 180       |
|                          | C.   | 707     | 1,324   | 1,933   | 2,264   | 3,001   | 2,848   | 5,284   | 9,449   | 10,900    |

Key: N.I. Nursery-Infant Schools  
C. Children

\*Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic.

†Transcaucasian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic.

## PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

| Year    | No. of Schools<br>of all types | Pupils in all<br>Grades | In percentages, taking 1914 as 100 |           |
|---------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------|
|         |                                |                         | Primary                            | Secondary |
| 1914-15 | .. 106,400                     | .. 7,800,600            | .. 100                             | .. 100    |
| 1920-21 | .. 118,398                     | .. 9,781,200            | .. 127.2                           | .. 101.7  |
| 1928-29 | .. 124,429                     | .. 12,074,800           | .. 144.7                           | .. 284.5  |
| 1930-31 | .. 152,654                     | .. 17,656,200           | .. 215.7                           | .. 362.6  |
| 1932-33 | .. 167,254                     | .. 21,813,400           | .. 251.2                           | .. 643.6  |
| 1934-35 | .. not to hand                 | .. 25,609,000           | .. 260.0                           | .. 1200.0 |

Percentage of children receiving secondary education

|         |      |
|---------|------|
| 1914    | 1934 |
| .. 5.5% | 16%  |

## HIGHER EDUCATION

| Type of Institution  |        | 1915    | 1928    | 1931    | 1932    | 1933    |
|--|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Higher education and higher technical  | I. . . | 91      | 129     | 537     | 645     | 721     |
|  | S. . . | 124,700 | 159,800 | 272,100 | 394,000 | 469,800 |
| Technicums . . . .   | I. . . | 233     | 1,650   | 2,932   | 3,096   | 3,522   |
|  | S. . . | 48,000  | 253,600 | 593,700 | 754,100 | 797,000 |
| Factory apprentice schools and kindred types . . . .   | I. . . | 2,644   | 1,314   | 3,265   | 3,970   | 3,900   |
|  | S. . . | 219,000 | 178,300 | 584,700 | 975,000 | 958,900 |
| Rabfacs . . . .  | I. . . | —       | 147     | 694     | 872     | 926     |
|  | S. . . | —       | 49,200  | 231,900 | 319,500 | 352,700 |
| Communist higher education institutions and higher education agricultural institutions . . . . | I. . . | —       | 19      | 49      | 53      | 76      |
|  | S. . . | —       | 8,400   | 18,900  | 30,500  | 31,000  |
| Communist Party Schools . . . .  | I. . . | —       | 100     | 108     | 163     | 280     |
|  | S. . . | —       | 17,000  | 23,800  | 33,600  | 40,000  |

Key: I.—Institutes

S.—Students

## STATISTICS

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## RESEARCH INSTITUTES

|                    | 1929 | 1930 | 1931 | 1932 | 1933*  |
|--------------------|------|------|------|------|--------|
| Institutes         | ..   | ..   | ..   | ..   | 840    |
| Branches           | ..   | ..   | ..   | ..   | 188    |
| Scientific workers | ..   | ..   | ..   | ..   | 47,000 |
| Post-graduates     | ..   | ..   | ..   | ..   | 6,400  |

\* Decrease in 1933 is due to reorganisation, and to dismissal of insufficiently qualified workers and post-graduates.



# ADULT CULTURAL EDUCATION (January 1st, 1933)

| Republics                  | Club Institutions |              |                         |              |         |                              |             | Peasants' Clubs. |
|----------------------------|-------------------|--------------|-------------------------|--------------|---------|------------------------------|-------------|------------------|
|                            | Mass Libraries    | Reading Huts | Socialist Culture Homes | Clubs        |         |                              | Total Clubs |                  |
|                            |                   |              |                         | Trade Unions | Kolkhoz | Education Depart. and others |             |                  |
| U.S.S.R. as a whole        | 32,456            | 34,214       | 1,772                   | 4,677        | 5,240   | 3,387                        | 49,290      | 5,333            |
| R.R.S.F.S.R. ..            | 18,372            | 24,533       | 373                     | 3,395        | 2,573   | 2,828                        | 33,702      | 805              |
| White Russia ..            | 1,427             | 382          | 605                     | 130          | 13      | 65                           | 1,195       | 20               |
| Ukraine ..                 | 10,275            | 4,703        | 699                     | 889          | 2,543   | —                            | 8,834       | 4,496            |
| Transcaucasian S.F.S.R. .. | 1,082             | 1,461        | 7                       | 183          | 71      | 308                          | 2,030       | 10               |
| Uzbekistan ..              | 607               | 2,806        | 82                      | 17           | 34      | 147                          | 3,086       | —                |
| Turkistan ..               | 116               | 28           | 6                       | 46           | 3       | 8                            | 91          | —                |
| Tadjikistan ..             | 77                | 301          | —                       | 17           | 3       | 31                           | 352         | 2                |

| Republics                  | Radio              |            |                   |            |   |          |                |
|----------------------------|--------------------|------------|-------------------|------------|---|----------|----------------|
|                            | Theatre Stationary | Travelling | Cinema Stationary | Travelling | Telegraph and Telephone Distributing Stations |          | Relay Stations |
|                            |                    |            |                   |            | Stations                                      | Stations |                |
| U.S.S.R. as a whole        | 386                | 174        | 15,024            | 14,139     | 57  | 427      | 4,908          |
| R.S.F.S.R. ..              | 238                | 129        | 10,289            | 11,010     | 41  | 337      | 3,549          |
| White Russia ..            | 12                 | 3          | 502               | 561        | 2   | 5        | 152            |
| Ukraine ..                 | 52                 | 30         | 3,107             | 1,807      | 8   | 42       | 847            |
| Transcaucasian S.F.S.R. .. | 44                 | 6          | 640               | 429        | 3   | 23       | 149            |
| Uzbekistan ..              | 26                 | 4          | 250               | 182        | 1   | 11       | 66             |
| Turkistan ..               | 5                  | 2          | 85                | 99         | 1   | 4        | 14             |
| Tadjikistan ..             | 9                  | —          | 151               | 51         | 1   | 5        | 31             |

Continued

## EXPENDITURE

| EDUCATION, including CULTURE EXPENDITURE |    |    | Year        |      | Expenditure        |      | % of Total Budget |  |
|--|----|----|-------------|------|--------------------|------|-------------------|--|
| U.S.S.R.                                 | .. | .. | 1932        | 1937 | 9.5 milliard rbls. | 21.2 | 26.1              |  |
| "  | .. | .. | Planned for | ..   | 20.5 "             |      |                   |  |

## EDUCATIONAL EXPENDITURE

| U.S.S.R.  | .. | .. | 1932     | 1937    | 8.4 milliard rbls. |          |         |  |
|---|----|----|----------|---------|--------------------|----------|---------|--|
| R.S.F.S.R.  | .. | .. | 7        | 1.8     | 3.6 "              |          |         |  |
| <hr/>   |    |    |          |         |                    |          |         |  |
| Average expenditure per person by State and local authorities, exclusive of social and economic organisations |    |    |          |         |                    |          |         |  |
| Average cost of pupil in primary school   | .. | .. | 11 rbls. | 87 kop. | ..                 | 31 rbls. | 21 kop. |  |
| " " " secondary school  | .. | .. | 31       | 21      | ..                 | 69       | "       |  |
| " " " In national areas, owing to economic backwardness, the cost per pupil reaches, for example              | .. | .. | 102      | ..      | ..                 | 177      | "       |  |
| 225 roubles in Yakutsk and Karelia  |    |    |          |         |                    |          |         |  |
| 250 " in Kara Kalpak  |    |    |          |         |                    |          |         |  |

## Typical expenditure by social and economic organisations on education :

|   |    | 1933              | 1934 |
|---|----|-------------------|------|
| Central Black Earth Region on school building | .. | 7.5 million rbls. |      |
| Gorki Region                                  | .. | 4.9               | "    |
| Leningrad District                            | .. | 2.3               | "    |
| Baskir Autonomous Republic                    | .. | 2.5               | "    |

## Examples of aid to individual schools :

|  |    | 1934        |
|--|----|-------------|
| Electrocombinat to No. 3 school, Stalin District, Moscow | .. | 7,000 rbls. |
| Furniture  | .. | 5,000 "     |
| Library  | .. | ..          |
| Equipment and re-decorating                              | .. | 12,000 "    |
| Pre-school   | .. | 15,000 "    |
| Other purposes   | .. | 50,000 "    |

Nineteen volunteer brigades of workers carried out the decorations and re-equipment.

|  |    | 1933         | 1934          |
|--|----|--------------|---------------|
| Factory Dynamo to School No. 9 in Proletarian District, Moscow | .. | 26,000 rbls. | 100,000 rbls. |

Similar aid is given by collective farms.



## **APPENDICES**



## APPENDIX I

### *National Minorities*

"No people oppressing other peoples can be free."—MARX AND ENGELS.

THERE are many achievements of which the Soviet Government can be justly proud, but of none so proud as of its solution to the problem of national minorities. If the Revolution had done nothing else, it would have been worth while for the liberation from a life of oppression, poverty, disease, and darkness, unimaginable to Europeans, of millions of inhabitants of those varied regions which comprise the U.S.S.R. Russia proper, where Russian was the native language, was but a small part of that vast Empire over which the Tsar ruled as the "Tsar of all Russia." The title is significant. Whatever the race or nationality may have been before absorption into the Empire, immediately after it became "Russia." The active policy pursued by the Tsars and their Ministers was to Russianise, outwardly, at least, every nationality. The census of 1926 underestimates when it gives the number of nationalities as 157, and the number of languages 147, reaching 200 with dialects. In the days of the Tsar there was only one language recognised—Russian. Even such comparatively well-developed countries as the Ukraine and White Russia were not allowed to use their own language, but were compelled to give all their education in Russian. This prohibition to give education in any but the Russian language applied to the whole Empire. In practice, however, Tsarist officials were not in a position to enforce this law throughout the whole of its Asiatic provinces. In some of them there remained Mohammedan schools, which, possibly unconsciously, were yet a support of Tsarist Imperialism.

The Imperial Ministry for Public Instruction, writing on the subject of nationalities, says: "The development and improvement of the native dialects, and the development of cultural education among the native population by these means, do not enter into the plan of the Government." The Seventh Congress of Noblemen was more outspoken: "The Russian State School must be Russian and nationalistically patriotic. . . . The Russian language must uncompromisingly predominate; all education must be carried on in Russian. Russia is a conglomeration of different nationalities; why should we deliberately create separation to which each nationality is prone? It behoves us noblemen to say the school must be Russian, and Russia for the Russians."

The 1897 census gives the state of literacy in the Empire as follows: Ukraine, 10 to 18 per cent; Armenia, 4·7 per cent; White Russia, 11 per cent; Georgia, 12 per cent; Tataria, 8 to 10 per cent; Uzbekistan, 1 per cent; Chouvashia, 5 per cent; the Mariis, 8 per cent; the Karelians, 10 per cent; the Tadjiks, 5 per cent; the Yakuts, 5 per cent. The census defined literacy as the ability to sign one's name. Where schools did exist, they were attended almost wholly by the children of Russian officials and settlers. The native—or, as the Russians termed them, the alien—children were those of well-to-do merchants, landowners, or native chieftains. This allowed free scope for the play of Russian Imperialism, and exploitation proceeded unchecked. The one aim with regard to these colonies was to obtain wealth to be spent in St. Petersburg, and soldiers to fight for the Tsar and the Empire. The Tsars were well supported in their objects by the religions of the Empire: Greek Orthodox, Mohammedan, and Shaman. When the Tsarist officials had taken their share of the spoils, the priests, the mullahs, the imams, and the Shahmans stepped in for theirs. These were followed by the local landowner or chieftain, who levied tribute in his turn. What remained had to keep the peasant and his family in Uzbekistan, or the hunter and his family in Yakutsk. It is not surprising, therefore, that between Imperialism at the centre, landlordism locally, and religion everywhere, the condition of the poor native was deplorable.

Travellers to these backward areas who were either sufficiently interested or courageous enough to describe conditions as they really existed were few. The official's business was to keep order, which would facilitate the collection of taxes, and the merchant's business was to collect wealth. They were quite uninterested in the natives except as a source of revenue or wealth. Information from non-Bolshevik sources about these countries is therefore scanty. Very few of the political exiles were in a position to study the region to which they were sent. An exception was Kropotkin. Writing of Siberia in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* in 1899, he says, "Education stands at a very low level. The chief town of every province is provided with a classical gymnasium where the sons of the local officials prepare for the university, and a gymnasium for the girls. . . . The desire of the local population for real schools is not satisfied. . . . Primary education is in a very unsatisfactory state and primary schools are very scarce." Nansen, in his book *Through Siberia*, published in 1918, reports Vostrolin, his Russian fellow-traveller. "He was not very proud of the condition of his country as regards education, newspapers, and intellectual interests." He recounts Vostrolin's comparison with an

experience he had in Norway in 1899 and continues, "He thought there was rather a big difference between this poor fisherman in a desolate part of Norway, who regularly read his newspaper, and knew the details of the Dreyfus case, and the prosperous traders of Siberia, who did not even know with whom their country was at war when they themselves were called to the colours." According to Nansen, no one in Krasnoyarsk could tell why there was a mobilisation at the time of the Boxer Rising. All that he could find out was that the Tsar was at war with the Yoltun Tsars. In writing of the Samoyeds, Nansen states how they complained to him bitterly of the heavy taxes levied on them. There was a poll tax on adult males of 10½ roubles, for which they obtained nothing in return; no schools, no priests, no doctors, and no roads. Further, they had lost their fishing rights to the Russians. A Russian official turns up, finds out who of the natives speaks Russian, and informs the rest of the tribe, through him, that they must elect him as their chief. This chief is won over with drink and gifts and becomes a henchman of the Government. Of the Ostyaks, Nansen writes: "They are rapidly dying out. They are all in debt to the traders, who make them drunk first and then take their furs for a bottle of vodka. The native is entirely dependent on the trader's valuation of his and their goods. The whole Samoyed race is rapidly declining in contact with European civilisation. In the north they are subject to the ravages of epidemics, in the south syphilis is added to them. The infant mortality is about 50 per cent of births."

The Bolshevik Revolution brought about a complete change in the country's attitude to the non-Russian nationalities, though the policy now practised met with a certain amount of opposition from Menshevik-minded members of the Communist Party. Soon after the Revolution the question of nationalities and national minorities presented itself for solution. There were members of the Communist Party who held that the international State could best be reached by absorbing all the various nationalities into one Soviet State, with Russian as the official language. To this point of view Lenin and Stalin were vehemently opposed. They insisted that the international State could only be achieved through free and cultured nationalities; that every large national area in the country must be a free Union Republic, with the right of secession. Lenin and Stalin won, and how right they were may be judged by the present conditions, economic and social, of the nationalities and national minorities. The Declaration of Freedom for National Minorities issued by the Council of National Minorities was signed by Lenin, Stalin, and other members of the Communist Party. It proclaimed:



" (1) The equality and sovereignty of Russian people.

" (2) The right of Russian people to complete independence, even to secession.

" (8) The abolition of all national and national religious privileges and limitations.

" (4) The free development of national minorities and ethnographic groups inhabiting Russia."

Difference of opinion on the treatment of nationalities persisted long after Lenin's death. It was some years before Lenin's policy was completely accepted by everyone. Krupskaya, Lenin's widow, addressing the first session of the Narkompros Central Council of National Minorities, said how concerned she was at the wrong attitude to this subject evident in many quarters. " We do not regard this question as one that can be considered apart from that of economic development. If we observe economic development, we note how the separate economic groups of the Middle Ages, as capitalism developed, formed themselves into larger economic units. These units began later to join up into large, powerful economic groups. . . . But capitalism now stands in the way of further unification, of a world union. . . . Naturally, this development of world economy is a very slow process, and can only be realised by a very high level of development in the different countries. The different national cultures run parallel with the economic development of the nations. . . . Capitalism developed one language out of various dialects, but did not produce a unified culture. The culture of the upper classes was totally different from the culture of the workers, as is well illustrated in a book called *The Two Nations*, by a nineteenth-century writer [Disraeli's *Sybil*]. Even our own Tolstoy writes in *Pedagogical Essays*: ' Does the Tula peasant need a railway going to Moscow? Is the peasant interested in the culture which interests the upper classes? ' All this is very antiquated to us. We give a very different meaning to national and international cultures. . . . National cultures are already nearer to one another than they were in the beginning of the capitalist era. . . . But it would be exceedingly naïve to imagine that an international culture can be constructed artificially. . . . Just as a planned world economy can only grow out of developed group economies, so international culture must grow out of a definite stage of development of national culture, but to create it artificially must never be attempted. . . . Naturally the whole Party line is totally different from the old attitude to nationalities existing in Tsarist times. . . . VI. Ilych [Lenin] used to tell of how the Siberian intelligentsia used to

speaking with disdain and contempt whenever the talk turned on any nationality not Russian, whether it was Tatar, Polish, or Jewish. Great Russian chauvinism was obvious in every criticism. . . . It would, however, be absurd to say that because a nationality was repressed we must take over the whole of its culture. It is necessary to analyse the elements of each national culture and use what is best, transforming it into Soviet culture. But the road to international culture does not lie through the extinction of national cultures. Only the negative, harmful side of national culture—such, for example, as the oppression of women in the East—is to be destroyed. It is important to find the right way for each national type. An inspector reports of a Grade 2 school in Ingoushetia that the children persist in sitting in families on separate forms. How do we approach a problem like this? We must realise that in these children's lives family exclusiveness was the way to an inner discipline which has educated them in the past. Whilst we try to train them for a larger social life by bringing them together in all work and play, we must be careful to retain the habit of inner discipline, which will form the basis of children's self-government, though working for a wholly new aim."

I have quoted at this length because Krupskaya epitomises all that is best and wisest in the U.S.S.R., and because she has so powerfully influenced education in the Soviet Union.

The U.S.S.R. was finally divided into three types of national States:

- (1) Union Republics, seven in number.
- (2) Autonomous Republics, sixteen in number.
- (3) National Regions, seventeen in number.

The numbers in group one are fixed permanently. In groups two and three they are subject to change. The latest addition was the Autonomous Jewish Republic in Biro-Bidjan, in the Far East. By the time this is in print there may be other changes. Each of these units has National District, National Area, and National Village Soviets. The Transcaucasian Federative Republic includes the three republics of Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaidjan. The diagram facing page 296 should help to make the structure of the U.S.S.R. clearer.

All the twenty-five different Republics<sup>1</sup> have Commissariats of Education, Health, Justice, Social Welfare, and Municipal Economy. The Union Republics have Commissariats of Agriculture, Labour and Finance, and Light Industry, and State Planning Commissions. The distinction between Union Republics and Autonomous Republics lies

<sup>1</sup> These include the three Transcaucasian Republics.

in the former's possession of the right of secession, a right not claimed by Autonomous Republics. The constitution of a Union Republic does not require ratification by the Central Executive Committee, whereas that of an Autonomous Republic does. In cases where Republics are incomplete economic units, they are included in larger (economic) divisions, known as areas. For example, the German Republic on the Volga is included in the Lower Volga Area. Such Republics reserve the right of secession from their area, and can submit their quarrels to the Central Executive Committee of the R.S.F.S.R. All the National Regions are included in areas, and are subordinate to their institutions. The highest Union organ for all nationalities is the Council of Nationalities, to which an equal number of members are elected from all nationalities, large or small. Where national minorities live in small but compact groups of one or more villages among national majorities, National Districts and National Soviets are organised. Local administration and education must be carried on in the native tongue. In the Ukraine, for example, there are three districts where the official language is Greek.

I hope by now the reader has some idea as to what the U.S.S.R. stands for. He may still be puzzled—as every visitor is until he learns—as to how, out of this welter of nations, peoples, and tribes, of languages and dialects, of different religions and such varied social customs, the Communists have been able to create a homogeneous entity. Not only have they achieved this, but, what is still more remarkable, within this unity they have retained the infinite diversity. The way was the way of the educationist and psychologist. Krupskaya, in the passage cited above, has given some indication of the method. The approach was never that of the conqueror imposing tribute on the conquered, but that of the friend and equal offering help.

In Leningrad there is an institute—it was originally only a department of the university—known as the Institute of the Northern Peoples, and in Moscow there is a body known as the Committee of the North. These two institutions have taken over responsibility for the Soviet North. There are roughly one million people inhabiting the Far North, divided into twenty-six nationalities, speaking twenty languages. Within these are many small groups and tribes with their own dialects. Fourteen of these northern nationalities had no written language before the Revolution. This set the earliest problem for the institute—to create first an alphabet, and then textbooks. No light task this. Let the reader look at a map to see the distances; let him remember that there are no railways, and that for nine months of the year the tundra is snowbound.

The creation of an alphabet meant an expedition of scientists to study the language on the spot. Before it could begin its work, the expedition had to establish friendly relations with the natives, whose only experience of white men hitherto had been of traders who robbed them of their furs, took their fishing rights from them, and brought them vodka and its accompanying evils.

The institute is residential and had, when I visited it in 1984, 425 students of various ages, from 25 nationalities. Of the students, 26 per cent were women. They come from the smallest groups, often from tribes. In the early days of its existence the institute accepted illiterate students. Now completion of five years' school is required before entrance—an index of the educational achievement of these people. The curricula and syllabuses for the primary and secondary schools and technicums are prepared in the institute. Besides training students, it does its own publishing, holds seminārs in the districts to give higher education locally, and carries on scientific research work. There are three departments: (1) The Department of Economics, which trains students for co-operative trading. This includes reindeer-breeding artels, hunting and fishing artels. (2) The Department of Administration, which trains workers for regional and district administrative work, Soviets, committees, etc. (3) The Department of Pedagogy, which trains native teachers of various grades. There is a Scientific Research Section with four branches, economic, historical, ethnographic, and pedagogic. An anthropological laboratory is collecting some very interesting and valuable data concerning these northern peoples. Lastly there is a section as interesting as any—the Commission for the Study of Native Art. It has been found that these northern peoples are extraordinarily gifted artistically. Much of their work shows a freshness, a charm, a knack of bringing out the essential, that is often absent from the work of more sophisticated artists. They are particularly happy in sculpture, for which they all show a special liking. The work that I saw exhibited in the institute was produced without any tuition. It appears that all that these natives need is the medium with which to work—colours, clay, and paper. Without having seen these materials before, they produce the most interesting results. The authorities show great wisdom. They do not attempt to teach these people, realising the harm that would result from imposing the outlook of the sophisticated European on a primitive people.

The teacher's course lasts four years, and consists of the general subjects plus one or two special ones. All the work in the institute is carried on in Russian, except that twice in ten days the instruction

is given in the native tongue. Numerous periodic conferences are held dealing with the different aspects of native life, in order to improve the qualifications of the students. They return to work in their own districts. I have so far given only the dry bones of the institute. It requires a stay of some time to appreciate it as a living, pulsating centre, to which men and women from the most primitive tribes come literally to receive light and learning, to hear of the unlimited possibilities of development for their people and for all peoples. They come from tribes amongst whom, in spite of the years that have passed since the Revolution, Shahmanism, or spirit worship, still persists in some of its crudest forms, where for centuries this religion has kept the people in darkness and ignorance. For the first time in their history they come into contact with civilisation and culture in a form which does not make them feel inferior human beings; which, on the contrary, opens up to them vistas of great achievements for their people. The value of the institute is incalculable. Through self-government here they learn to govern others. Through the numerous circles, dramatic, musical, literary, athletic, and political, they increase their capacities and broaden their horizon. It is no wonder that they return to their districts enthusiastic supporters of a régime which has for the first time recognised them as human beings of equal importance with the rest of mankind, a régime which has given them an opportunity for development which shall help them to erase the term "inferior races."

The difficulties of taking education to the peoples of the North seemed almost insurmountable at first. The obstacles created by nature, distance, and climate were serious enough. Still more serious were the obstacles created by man—the power of the Shahman, the religious chief, who kept the group, over which he was supposed to rule spiritually, in terrorised obedience. It is a religion often closely allied to totemism, according to which various spirits held sway. These different spirits had to be propitiated frequently. In time of disaster they had to be placated. Their agent was the Shahman, with whom alone the spirits held direct intercourse. It was therefore important to be on the right side of the Shahman. This meant frequent gifts of reindeer, furs, or fish. Should a member of a family fall ill, then the only known and approved remedy was for the Shahman to get into contact with the appropriate spirit. For this, of course, one had to pay. The price was the best reindeer or sheep, according to circumstances. These had to be sacrificed in accordance with strict ritual. The best portions were handed to the Shahman as a gift. Sometimes, if the illness was very serious, a second sacrifice was demanded. The bigger the gift the

more chances of recovery. Among the very poor families, if the one to fall ill was either too young or too old to be a worker, the unfortunate one was left to die without any help, since the family could not afford the sacrifice for a "useless" member. It was useful to be friendly with the Shahman generally, so that by intercession he might ward off evil spirits at all times. This too had to be paid for. He was a good business man, was the Shahman. He had a special hut to which he retired when intercession was necessary. Its sacredness ensured its privacy. There he sometimes performed antics and practised rites very like those of the African medicine-man. To show that the animals sacrificed were not just payment for services rendered, but acts of symbolic significance, he cut off tufts of hair from the neck of the reindeer and sewed these round his outer garment. The more of these tufts there were on his garment the greater was his importance. He was wily too. When, as time went on after the Revolution, local Soviets were set up, he manœuvred his own election—if possible as chairman; if not, then as an ordinary member of the committee. All this and more did the Soviet educational worker, sent by the authorities, have to contend with, and the fight had to be carried on with great tact, caution, and ingenuity. In the beginning there was never any anti-religious campaign carried on in these areas, nor any insistence by Communist Party workers on collectivisation. The approach was quite different. A few workers, one of whom perhaps knew the local language, would be sent out to organise a cultural base. This operated a medical station first; then was added a hospital, a veterinary station, a school, and a literacy station for adults. The first step was to win the confidence of the natives. Here the usual policy of attracting the poorest was followed. Sometimes this was a lengthy and difficult process. The natives could not understand why white people should want to help them. With the help of the medical and veterinary stations their suspicions were in time overcome. The next step was to create a school. For the school, as for all buildings, material had to be brought possibly from a thousand miles away, as none existed locally. Most of these peoples are nomads, moving with the herds of reindeer in search of pastures, or with the changing hunting-grounds. During the winter some of the tribes return to the same settlement year after year; others never come back.

The first schools were nomadic schools. A teacher was attached to a group, and moved about with it, while carrying on his work. Not exactly ideal teaching conditions! The second stage was the organisation of a boarding-school. This was a much more serious problem.

The building material sent from some centre a thousand miles away rarely arrived to time or as specified. Workers were scarce, the natives being quite unused to this kind of work. At last the school was ready, but there were no pupils. The native parents would not entrust their children to white strangers.

I was fortunate enough, when in Moscow in 1932, to meet T. Z. Semoushkin, who had recently returned from the Chukotsky National District, the furthestmost north-eastern province of the U.S.S.R., where he had organised a boarding-school. In terse, vivid phrase, with an infectious enthusiasm, he related to me some of his experiences. It took him and his colleagues about seven weeks to get to the cultural base. The condition of the seas forced them to disembark on the frozen desert land of Chukotia. The captain of the boat which was bringing them insisted that ice was forming rapidly, and refused to continue the journey. He would take them back to the nearest accessible port, but further he would not go. Having got so far, none of the party was prepared to go back, so they disembarked where they could. From the shore, travelling partly on foot, partly in native boats along the rivers, partly on dog sleighs, sleeping at night in Chukot encampments, seven days' journeying brought them to the cultural base. Semoushkin was very grateful for this experience, as it enabled him to become acquainted with the ordinary mode of life among the Chukots, and to establish friendly contact with some of the natives.

The cultural base consisted of twelve European buildings, and seemed far removed from native settlements. The school boarding-house was vast, unfinished, gloomy, and damp. He realised at once that to house children here, particularly children of these people, was far too risky. He therefore decided to use the school itself, a much better building, as hostel as well as school. By dividing it into two his purpose was achieved. It could accommodate twenty children. The staff decided that their first work must be with the parents, to inspire them with sufficient confidence to hand over their children to the school. They had already become reconciled to day school, but this was the first attempt at a boarding-school. The efforts of the staff were finally crowned with success, and twenty-two children were enrolled after medical examination. The affection between these parents and their children was going to give rise to much difficulty for the staff. So abnormally strong is it that, if either is away from the other for a few days, they begin to pine, and literally fall ill. Fortunately, at first the childish curiosity in their very unusual surroundings kept the children from grieving. They had

never been in a dwelling other than a tent, so that the school walls filled them with amazement. They spent much time leaning against them to see what would happen. Beds they had never seen. All the family slept on skins or rags on the floor of the tent. When Semoushkin visited the dormitory the first night, the queerest picture met his gaze. Not one child was lying on the bed in the expected way. One had his feet on the pillow and the rest of him on the floor. Another knelt by the bed with his head on it, fast asleep. They were to be seen in all sorts of positions except the ordinary sleeping one. There literally arose the question of teaching them how to sleep. The next day brought another momentous occasion—washing. Until this day no water had ever touched these children's faces. The whole process—water, towels, washing—struck the children as irresistibly funny. Several ate the soap thinking it was reindeer fat. Three days went by in getting to know the children, in getting them used to their very strange surroundings. The first excitement over, the children became very homesick; they began to pine and droop. Matters were brought to a head when two girls ran away. On approaching the school, Semoushkin noticed two girls running as fast as they could. Enquiry among the children elicited the information that they were running home, as they could not bear to be away from their parents any longer. It was the end of December, the short day nearly at its close, with 26 degrees of frost. Swiftly he harnessed a sledge, took some warm clothing for the children, pulled his felt boots on during the journey so as not to waste precious time, and set off to catch the children to take them to their homes. He reached their settlement, twelve kilometres away, without having caught them up. To his horror, there was no sign of them here. Expecting the worst—an accusation of murder from the natives, with a possible revolt against the white man—he approached one of the dwellings. To his great relief, the Chukots did not regard a twelve-kilometre journey by two ten-year-old girls over the snow-covered tundra as matter for anxiety. On the contrary, they were very pleased with the evidence of his care for their children, particularly so when they saw the warm clothing he had brought. The children were soon found. They had taken a direct route across the snows. This episode decided him to ignore the regulations of Narkompros with regard to holidays. He would give the children a holiday at once. When he told the children, after his return, that on the next day all of them, including the teachers, would go to spend a holiday with their parents, their joy knew no bounds. This holiday proved successful, though Semoushkin suffered much from the interminable tea-drinkings in the native huts,



where the atmosphere after a very short while became for him unbearable, but seemed to suit the natives.

Much more did he relate to me—of the first bath, the tact, the psychological insight that were required; nearly as much as for the first haircut. He himself went with a few chosen braves into the bath-house. It was some time before they got over their amazement at his white skin. Later there was the excitement of showing them a film, and the problem of its explanation. How to prevent them connecting it with the spirits which their parents worshipped? That too was accomplished. The death in the school of one of the pupils cast a gloom over them all. When the dead child's father came to take the body, he begged for a piece of the sheet on which he had died, as, according to Chukot custom, several articles which the dead used when alive are always buried with him. With some trepidation for discrepancies in the hospital stock list, the doctor complied with the request. There was no hint of anti-religious propaganda at this stage. With the body was also buried some paper, and the pen and pencil the boy had used in school.

The arrival of an aeroplane served as valuable educational material for the children and adults. They quickly developed a liking for flying.

After four years' work, Semoushkin was satisfied that the school was a great success. In the near future it was to be developed into a seven-year school, preparing the children for the various activities of the district—seal-hunting, fur-trapping, reindeer-breeding, and the new co-operative life. For their medical and pedagogical training, both the Chukots and Esquimaux would come to Moscow on an equality with other inhabitants of the U.S.S.R. Semoushkin's work is typical of what is being done in many other districts. When the almost insuperable difficulties with which the Soviet cultural workers had to contend in the Far North are taken into account, the achievements are amazing. There are no racial groups which at this day are not receiving some education or other, for adults as well as children, poor though it may still be in some cases. Every district has now its cultural base, with a boarding-school wherever possible. Where this is not possible the school travels with the tribe. For the settled inhabitants—and settlement is being greatly encouraged—there is a day school. A medical and veterinary station makes up the minimum that must be included in a cultural base. The more developed bases have a hospital, cinema, club-house with adult education centre, and a co-operative. Twenty-six national groups have now a written alphabet; of these fourteen have been Latinised. There are now a considerable

number of incomplete secondary schools which the pupils attend till fifteen or sixteen years of age. There are a number of technicums and seminärs for the training of teachers. There still remains much to be done. Often the school building is very unsatisfactory, the school very ill equipped, the teaching of a very poor quality. But it is only a matter of time for the eradication of these defects.

Several million people belonging to national minorities inhabit the lands south of the R.S.F.S.R.—as far south as the Black and Caspian Seas—and as far east as the Pacific Ocean. The education of these peoples is under the final supervision of the Central Research Institute for the Education of National Minorities, in Moscow. There are now several Regional National Minority Education Institutes, but that in Moscow is the fountain head. The difficulties which confronted Soviet educationists in Asiatic Russia were even greater, because the interests opposed were more powerful than those met with in the Far North. Imperialism had been much more active here, and the Tsarist yoke weighed very heavily. To this is to be added the exploitation of the peasant and worker by the landlord and factory owner. The sum was completed by the exploitation by the religious leaders, the mullahs and imams. Thus the Asiatic peasant or worker suffered a triple burden, laid on him by the Tsar, by the landlord and factory owner, and by religion. As in the North, so here, the approach was very skilful. No direct attack was made on any of these evils. Religion particularly was left unmolested for a very long time. The first essays were made secretly by women Party members. Disguised as Mohammedan women, they mingled with processions and crowds. Selecting a likely subject, they would sidle up to her, and whisper of the new life open to women in other parts of the U.S.S.R. Would she like to hear more about it? Then let her come secretly to such and such a place that night. The younger women came eagerly, though they knew that they endangered their lives thereby. Should they be found out, the penalty might very likely be death. They were no better than the slaves of their husbands and families. At the age of nine or ten they were sold to a man whom they had never seen. By the age of eleven many of them were mothers. It was not uncommon for a girl of twenty-one to have had nine or ten children, only one of whom survived. Motherhood was not allowed to interfere with the chief reason for woman's existence—work. The woman worked in the fields or carpet factory while the man lounged about at home. It was a common sight to see her carrying two children to and from work. One was tied on her back and one at her bosom, while her hands were busy knitting stockings. Food, too, was

scarce for the young wife. The first pickings of the meat went to the man. The piece was then passed on in order of importance to the women members of the household. By the time it reached the young wife there was only the bone left. She was excluded from religion and politics. There were districts where women were not permitted to sing, it being contrary to religious custom. Small wonder that here was fertile ground for Soviet propaganda. Secretly the young women learnt to read and write. After a year or two the bravest and most enthusiastic themselves became teachers and propagandists. For this daring to flout custom and authority they often paid the penalty of a horrible death. A free educated woman not only undermined Mohammedan power, but was destructive of the authority of the male. In freeing herself from slavery she was depriving the man of his slave. Soviet workers paid the utmost penalty equally with the native workers. The secretary of the institute in Moscow told me how he had sent a party of twenty-five educational workers to the North Caucasus. A year later he himself went down to inspect progress. He found twelve out of this number had either been killed outright, or so mutilated that they lay dying. The following year two more paid the price of opposition to the forces of reaction. They were the heroes of the educational front.

The peoples inhabiting these areas belong mainly to three ethnographic groups, the Turco-Tatar, the Iranian, and the Japhetic. There were many minorities among these groups which, like those of the North, had no written alphabet. Among those who had an alphabet, the most widely used was Arabic. The Mongolian alphabet was used by such peoples as the Kalmyks, Buryats, and Mongols. There were also a Jewish alphabet, a Syrian alphabet used by a few Eastern peoples like the Oyakids, Ossetians, etc., and a Church-Russian alphabet. This diversity of alphabets acted as a barrier between the peoples and made Tsarist exploitation easier.

The Arab alphabet was nearly as difficult as the Chinese. Created over 2,000 years ago, it was only used by a select minority of the people. It was not used by the masses, though every good Mussulman carried the printed work of the "Imam-Shah" as a talisman and a protection against unbelievers. It took from one to two years to learn the alphabet. Before the ability to put a word together was acquired the pupil had to memorise 1,624 different shapes, as well as a number of curves, signs and counter-signs, and hooks, the addition of any of which changed the sound. A period of twenty-five years was required to complete the full educational course in a Mohammedan school.

Under the Tsarist régime there were three types of schools for the non-Russians of Mohammedan belief—the confessional school, the general State school, and the Russian native school. The last was of the Ilminsky type, which attempted to liberalise native education. The second gave education in the Russian language, and was an attempt to Russianise the natives. The confessional or Mohammedan religious schools were in a deplorable condition. They were known as mekhteb, or medresseh, and were financed by country aóuls. The teachers were the mullahs, imams, or ishahni, all priests of some kind. The Arab alphabet was the entire educational apparatus. The syllabus was religion, and the methods were mechanical learning by heart and corporal punishment. These mekhteb were the instruments not only of spiritual torture; physically, too, they tortured the children of the semi-starved poor, who knew of no other schools to which they could send their children. In any case the better conducted schools were reserved for the well-to-do. Parents who handed their children over to the mullah agreed to the tradition as stated by him—"That part of the body which is beaten will not burn in hell." When handing over the child to the mullah the father repeated, "The flesh for you, the bones for me." The mullah or imam did not scruple to use his right over the boy. In the Kazak Mekhteb of the Hadjah the punishment for not knowing a lesson or for inattention was often the following. The wrongdoer was placed on the back of another boy with his arms round the boy's neck, while his legs were held firmly by the boy. While thus firmly fixed the mullah beat him with a whip or thong. In a Tatar mekhteb or medresseh, for similar crimes or for not saying prayers five times a day a plaited leather thong was used. The offender removed his outer garments, and, clad in a vest only, had to lie flat on the floor and count the number of strokes he was to receive. Those children whose parents were in a position to send the mullah frequent gifts were found not to require much punishment. The mental torture must have been nearly as great as the physical. Learning began with "The Articles of Faith," a short book of the laws of Allah and His Prophet, the principles of belief in them, in fate, and in life after death. All this had to be learnt by heart in the Arabic language, of which the children of the minorities knew not a word. For every chapter learnt the father had to send a present to the mullah. There were no fees paid to these schools. If the present were not forthcoming, the boy was found inattentive or guilty of some equally heinous crime. The schools of the other language groups, the Mongolian, the Japhetic, and the Iranian, were run on similar lines. The Communist declaration which abolished religion from the schools sounded the death-knell of

this form of education, though, unfortunately for its victims, it was a long time dying.

The rule that all education must be given in the native language brought the problem of the alphabet to the fore here too. It occupied Soviet scientists very early. There could be no universal education with an alphabet that took from one to two years to learn. After some years of deliberation and experiment, it was decided to Latinise the Arabic script, and to simplify the alphabet, and so bring it into line with modern international needs. There were many sounds in the non-Arabic languages which had no corresponding sound in the Arabic. In 1926 the first All-Union Turcological Congress held at Baku demanded the introduction of the Latin script in all Turco-Tatar regions. The demand was acceded to, and, at the time of writing, eighteen languages in the Turco-Tatar group, two in the Mongolian group, ten in the Japhetic group, six in the Iranian group, including Mountain Hebrew, and one in the Far Eastern group are using the Latinised script. An All-Union Committee of the New Alphabets has replaced the Turcological Committee. Forty new alphabets have been created up to date for these groups. Where a group was very small, and its language had some resemblance to that of the larger group of which it was part, or with which it was contiguous, it was given the alphabet of the larger group.

Making alphabets was only a beginning. This had to be followed by textbooks, the creation of which demanded much care, understanding, and knowledge. An arithmetic book which used such words as eggs or apples would be unsuitable for children of the Far North. Their language did not include such words as apple or egg. Such things had no existence in their experience. Similar problems presented themselves in social science. To talk of State farms or industrial enterprises to the children of the hill tribes of Kazakstan was more than useless. This problem, too, has been solved in the main. Later, when their experience has become considerably wider and they meet new forms of life and industry, they will be given new textbooks. The new words will be Russian, or such as are internationally used. In 1982 textbooks were issued in ninety-four languages. Most of this work of preparing textbooks has still to be done by the central institutions, since very few of the nationalities have their own qualified people for this work. Every Republic and area has a special scientific institute attached to its Narkompros, which deals with the problem of textbooks. These are all helped by the Central Institute in Moscow, which issues standard books on biology, mathematics, and other international sciences.

National culture textbooks, giving special courses in the history of the particular nationality, textbooks in physical and economic geography, are published separately for each nationality. In 1984 there were three expeditions to different parts of the U.S.S.R. to study the results of the textbooks so far issued.

Printing presented the double problem of type and machinery. The type used hitherto was very large, awkward, and uneconomical. Scientists, ethnographers, and artists were set to work. The research department of the Polygraphic Institute in Moscow was responsible for much of the work. Some years of research and experiment went to the final selection of the type. All the printing before the Revolution was done by hand. There existed no typographic machinery. Now machinery is to be found everywhere, and I was informed with pride that Marx and Engels are being printed by natives in their own language, in their own shops. They also print some of their own textbooks.

One had never regarded a typewriter as an emblem of revolution, but in these areas it is not only an emblem, it is an instrument of revolution. The ordinary typewriters were useless for these nationalities, for their languages possessed both vowels and consonants not to be found on existing typewriters. Therefore typewriters had to be specially made. These have literally created a revolution in the lives of the nomadic tribes. Hitherto all reports and instructions of the local and regional Soviets had to be translated into Russian before they could be typed. And this was not much use to those who knew no Russian. Now every nomad receives his typed report of instructions, of suggestions, of the Socialist progress of his particular nationality. All notices, instructions, and explanations are received by him direct, and not through an intermediary, who often found it advantageous to give an incorrect translation. He is ceasing to feel isolated or helpless.

Equally important was the introduction of native shorthand. Reports of meetings are now taken down in native shorthand and typed on native typewriters.

Yakutsk, an Autonomous Republic, needs a few words to itself. It is a vast sparsely populated area, about four times the size of Norway and Sweden. It is bordered by the Arctic Ocean on the north, not very far from Manchuria in the south, and separated from the Pacific Ocean by the Far Eastern Province. Its chief characteristics are its isolation and its distances. It takes from four to six weeks to get there from Moscow unless one travels by air. It is rich in waterways and untapped mineral wealth. The density of the population

is one person to twelve square kilometres. It has about twenty national regions, each with its own language and customs. In all these regions there are national districts and groups; and even tribes, each with its own language or dialect and its peculiar customs.

Yakutsk, because of its potential wealth, was not left in complete backwardness by the Tsars. In pre-revolutionary days it had 140 schools, 50 per cent of which were religious schools. All education was in the Russian tongue. The child population of the province was 86 per cent Yakut and 14 per cent Russian, yet only 50 per cent of the schoolchildren were Yakut. There were four secondary schools in the whole area, two for boys and two for girls, with 800 pupils. Of these, only 10 per cent were Yakut. There were no facilities for higher education in the province. Students had to go to Russia for that. The number of Yakut professor students in Russian universities was ten. The Yakut who was giving me all this information told me that just prior to the Revolution there were only three natives in the whole of Yakutsk who had received higher education. Soon after 1917, when two of these left, he was the only one to claim that distinction. Literacy in Russian was 2 per cent. The missionaries who first set up schools for the native children adapted the Russian alphabet to the native language and produced textbooks. Bötling, a German ethnologist, who spent some time in Yakutsk studying the language, compiled a native grammar. His transcription is still used. After the 1905 Revolution, a stimulus to intellectual life was received from the revolutionaries exiled there. They joined with the wealthy local landowners and traders and formed a Union of Yakutsk, demanding the right of self-government. They organised clubs, translated and wrote plays in Yakut, started a newspaper, and, in 1918, a journal. After the 1917 Revolution Yakutsk broke away from the Empire. The next year saw the development of the Yakut language. In the years following, the new orthography, based on the Latin script, was adopted. In 1920 Yakutsk became Soviet, and joined the Union. Immediately a great drive for education for the children of the poor began. The Yakut language was made compulsory in all schools. There was an energetic campaign for the building of schools and the training of teachers. Numbers of schools were built by the parents, with their labour and materials. At the present time all children between the ages of eight and twelve are at school. In 1988 there were 88,000 children in primary schools. The pre-school problem is still far from solution. There is a great lack of personnel, buildings, and equipment. In 1988 there were about 4,000 children under supervision in summer playgrounds.







The school problem was here, too, complicated by the nomadic habits of the people of the northern part of Yakutsk. It has been solved by organising, as part of every school in that district, a boarding-house for the children of the nomads. Co-education was practised more in theory than in fact in the early days. The boys were generally sent to school willingly, but not so the girls. They were not considered to require any education. It required much tact and patience to get the girls into school. Many of the backward national groups still consider women inferior to men, only good to look after the hut and the children.

Yakutsk has at present 14 technical institutes, with 2,000 students. Higher educational institutes have about 1,000 students, of whom between 60 and 70 per cent are Yakuts. In 1934 a pedagogical institute was created, with two teacher-training colleges for full-time courses, and short six-monthly courses. One of the many difficulties still to be met with is staff. It will be some years before that completely disappears. There are not nearly enough teachers, and most of those in the schools are not sufficiently trained or experienced. Again this is only a matter of time. The will and the means for a first-class educational system already exist.

Adult education was non-existent before the Revolution. In 1933 there were 215 adult education institutions, and innumerable centres for the elimination of illiteracy and for educating the semi-literates into literates. In 1932 literacy was 64 per cent, and by 1935 it was expected that illiteracy in all those under fifty will cease to exist. In that year there was also to be created the first agricultural institute in Yakutsk.

The Yakuts at present show little evidence of being an artistic people. Music and painting are very weak. The theatre is a little stronger, and wherever it exists it is closely linked up with the school. There were fifteen Yakut authors in 1934, but none outstanding.

The educational achievements for the whole of Asiatic Russia have been stupendous when the past is remembered. Over the whole area about 95 per cent of the children between the ages of eight and twelve are at school. The child under eight is now receiving serious attention. Party and Government recommendations, which almost amount to commands, have been made to all co-operative societies, artels, and local authorities to organise nursery-infant schools, or at least make a beginning with a children's playground in the summer and a playroom in the winter.

There are technicums for professional and technical training of skilled workers, technical institutes, and higher educational institutions

in all the Republics and autonomous regions. Some of the more advanced of these have research institutes which compare favourably with any in Moscow or Leningrad. In primary schools education is in the native tongue. It should be so in secondary schools, but, owing to the shortage of qualified native teachers for this stage, this aim has not yet been achieved. The percentage of education given in the native language varies between 14 and 70, and occasionally reaches 90. All higher education is in the Russian language, and the native language is in this case taken as a subject. The second language learnt is that of the nationality of which the district, region, or group is a part, and is taken variously at the age of nine, ten, or eleven years. As Russian is the Union language, all are expected to know it. It often happens, then, that a child has to learn two other languages of the Union besides its mother tongue before it can think about a foreign language such as English or German. A Jewish child in the Ukraine, for example, will have its education in Yiddish. At about nine or ten years it will learn Ukrainian as its first language, and, a year or so later, Russian. After that it will do a foreign language.

I found no one who would admit that this was a hardship for the children, or a hindrance to education. To begin with, it is only where a group is completely self-contained and shut off from its larger unit that the children do not naturally pick up a good deal of their second language. Such cases are rare. Then these schools spend much time on language, and as, in many areas, the native tongue is dropped in school at the age of fourteen or so, except for two hours a week, and education proceeds in the next language, the difficulties are perhaps not as great as they appear to the foreign visitor. However it may be, the Soviet authorities firmly believe that internationalism can only come from a freely developed nationalism; that you cannot graft an alien culture on to a people, and that the first education must be in a child's mother tongue. They hope that in time many of the smaller language groups will naturally coalesce with the larger neighbouring groups, and thus gradually the multiplicity of tongues will disappear.

The number of newspapers in the national languages has increased from 25 before the Revolution to 700 in 1931. There must be many more now. Every nationality, except those of the Far North and a few in the Far East which have only recently received an alphabet, has its newspaper of some sort. Strenuous efforts are being made to improve the quality of native literature. General literature was, before 1917, published in twenty-four languages, and was mainly religious. In 1931 literature was published in seventy-three languages, and was

mainly scientific and political. In 1929–30 the national printing-houses issued 15,000 publications, with sixty-seven editions of Lenin's works in different languages, in one year. By 1984, seventy-four national minorities and groups, previously without a written alphabet, had received one. The Latin script is used by sixty-eight nationalities. There has been a great development of the general cultural life of the nationalities—in theatres, which have flourished particularly in Georgia, Uzbekistan, Bashkiria, White Russia, the Tatar Republic, the Marii District, and Turkestan. All these were highly praised at the All-Union Theatre Olympiad in 1980. Museum statistics are also an interesting indication of cultural development:

|                           | <i>Prior to 1917</i> |   |   |   | 1984 |
|---------------------------|----------------------|---|---|---|------|
| Social-Economic Museums . | 1                    | . | . | . | 10   |
| Natural Science Museums . | 3                    | . | . | . | 9    |
| Technical Museums .       | 3                    | . | . | . | 8    |
| Ethnographic Museums .    | 16                   | . | . | . | 85   |
| Arts Museums .            | 6                    | . | . | . | 17   |
| Revolutionary Museums .   | 6                    | . | . | . | 84   |
| Anti-Religious Museums .  | —                    | . | . | . | 5    |

The cinema and the wireless have spread rapidly. Travelling cinemas go to all remote places where there is not a stationary one. There are comparatively few people in the U.S.S.R. who have not somehow seen a cinema performance. Wireless sets are to be found in almost every hut, and often in the tents of the nomads.

Scientific research institutes are also rapidly increasing. Uzbekistan, for example, an Asiatic region where before the Revolution literacy was 1 per cent, now has 28 research institutes, with 4 branches. There are 28,000 research workers in the U.S.S.R., and about 10 per cent of these belong to national minorities. The Crimea has 18 per cent, the Buryat Republic 50 per cent, Transcaucasia 72 per cent, and White Russia 77 per cent national scientific workers.

Every large area has now its own research institute, carrying on work into the educational problems of national minorities. Educationally they are advancing so rapidly that the Central National Minorities' Institute in Moscow is often unaware of the progress made. It is not only the larger units that are developing fast. Many of the minor groups are joining the front ranks of education. For example, after an expedition it was discovered that a small tribe known as the Akhti, inhabiting the highest and most inaccessible points of Kazakhstan, has with its own resources, and quite unaided, created a school

so good that it has become the model school for the whole district. Research workers have found that improved economic conditions render these small backward groups as capable and as intelligent as the European Russians. When the syllabuses for the schools in the backward regions were first drawn up, they were allowed an extra year for completion. It has now been found that generally this is unnecessary, and the syllabus, allowing for variations due to local conditions, is the same for everyone. The psychological research that has been going on has found no support for the theory of a hereditary inferiority of mentality among native races. The Director of the psychology department was very emphatic about this. He insisted that racial intellectual inferiority is the result of inferior economic conditions. He gave me many instances of the extraordinary improvement in school work after only a few years.

Some of the most fruitful and important activities of the National Minorities' Institute in Moscow are the periodic expeditions to various distant parts of the Union. Sometimes they are sent at the request of the local education authority, sometimes the initiative comes from the institute. Such an expedition was sent to Karaganda, in Kazakhstan, in 1982. It collected a wealth of material on the educational and social conditions of the locality. The work was very thorough, and the research workers were not sparing in criticism. The existing educational conditions left much to be desired in respect of school buildings, staffing, and equipment. The constructive side of the work took the form of meetings and conferences with the local teachers, education authorities, and social organisations. Finally, on its return the expedition drew up a report which has already been published. This report, which includes suggestions as well as criticism, will be a very effective way of improving conditions in Karaganda. The whole of the U.S.S.R. now knows its shortcomings, and it will put forth great efforts to remove the stigma of backwardness from its name.

Two expeditions were sent in April 1988 for similar work in Tadzhikistan. The institute receives requests from minority education authorities for help of all kinds. It was asked by Kirghiz to organise an education exhibition. Others request help with textbooks. In the institute itself, post-graduates and professors work on the innumerable problems connected with education of national minorities; language, curricula, textbooks, art, child psychology, methods of teaching, particularly language teaching and the training of educationists for administrative and teaching work. When post-graduates have finished their course, they usually return to their own district, to become lecturers in technicums or institutes, Directors of

schools, methods instructors, etc. As a result of considerable and lengthy effort, the institute has now drawn up a syllabus for a ten-year school for national minorities. It contains nineteen subjects divided into groups as follows, with the percentage of time to be spent on each group: native language and literature, 15·8 per cent; social science, 14·8 per cent; natural science, 17·8 per cent; poly-technisation, 16·5 per cent; art, 5·6 per cent; mathematics, 17·8 per cent; foreign languages, 7 per cent; physical culture, 5·2 per cent. The apparently small percentage of time allowed to art is somewhat deceptive. The out-of-school activities, which are part of the educational system, provide ample facilities for art work, as I show in Chapter VI.

I have so far said nothing about the Ukraine, a most important Union Republic. Under the Tsarist régime it suffered with the other non-Russian regions in being prohibited the use of its language in education. In spite of that, it was by far the most advanced of the non-Russian States. Kiev University was world-famous. Literacy, however, was limited to about 18 per cent of the population. The Ukraine went through many vicissitudes before it finally joined the Union. At first its system of education differed in certain respects from that of the rest of the Union. In 1932 it adopted the same system. It is now in the forefront of educational achievement. Illiteracy has been eliminated up to the age of sixty. All children between the ages of eight and fifteen are at school, and it is hoped that by 1937 the school age for all children will be raised to eighteen. Pre-school education is making great strides. The Ukraine has a very fine Academy of Science, which is responsible for much important scientific research. The capital has been moved back to Kiev, which should give a great impetus to the educational activities of that city.

The Ukraine has its own national problems. It has Russians, Jews, Poles, Czechs, Bulgarians, and Greeks, all in more or less compact groups, some large, others quite small, each of which requires special educational facilities. The largest minority is formed by the Jews, of whom there are nearly two million.

All Jewish schools use the Yiddish language. The question of Yiddish versus Hebrew has been definitely settled in favour of the former. The education authorities claim that the language of the people is Yiddish and not Hebrew, which was only known to any extent by the male population, and was never used in daily life. They consider that it would have been very wrong to take away the mother tongue and substitute for it an ancient, almost dead language.

One strongly suspected, and occasionally glimpsed, a political objection as well as an educational one. Those Jews who insist on Hebrew as their language are politically nationalist, and political nationalism is inimical to internationalism, whereas cultural nationalism only aids its development. There are 600 Jewish schools in the Ukraine, catering for 120,000 children. Those Jewish children who do not know Yiddish attend the Ukrainian schools. There is no compulsion on a parent to send a child to any particular school, and it is not unusual to find several nationalities in one school learning in the same language.

There are 6 Jewish training colleges, 2 pedagogical institutes, an agricultural institute, and a Jewish department in the Kharkov State University. A special institute for scientific research in Jewish history, life, literature, art, pedagogy, and economics has been recently created, with Professor Liebenberg as the Director. It already has 100 scientific workers. The Ukrainians claim that this institute is unique of its kind. There are three national Jewish regions in the Ukraine where the population is wholly Jewish. There are fifteen papers and journals published in Yiddish. The biggest newspaper, *Der Stern*, published in Kharkov, is comparable to *Pravda*, I was told. There are already well-known Jewish writers like Hofstein, Pfeifer, and Bergelson. It is claimed that the last named is even greater than Bialik.

The Russian minority presents no educational problem to the Ukraine. A Russian institute and training college exists for the training of teachers. Highly qualified workers are sent from Moscow, as are also textbooks, literature, etc. In return, the Ukraine sends its teachers, professors, etc., to serve the Ukrainian minority in the R.S.F.S.R.

Polish culture is well developed, and education for the Polish minority presents no more difficulties than for the Russian minority. There is a special Polish national region, with 650 schools; Kiev has a Polish pedagogical institute, 2 training colleges, and an Institute for Scientific Research into Polish Proletarian Culture.

The Germans have five national regions in the Ukraine, with 600 schools. They form compact national masses, and are characterised by their collective economy. They are in advance of most of the smaller national minorities. They have their pedagogical institute and two training colleges at Dneproges.

The Greeks were a considerable problem. They came in the seventeenth century, settled round the Sea of Azov, with Mariopol as their centre. The long separation from the mother country resulted in a

dialect which was very little like modern Greek, yet quite unlike Ukrainian. After much discussion, the decision was reached not to construct a new language out of this dialect, but to adopt modern Greek, with its rich cultural heritage. It meant that the teachers had to learn modern Greek before the schools could be organised. Textbooks were another problem. Modern Greek textbooks were wholly unsuited for Soviet Greeks. All difficulties have now been overcome. Mariopol has now a training college, Rostov a Greek publishing house, and there is a Greek daily paper.

The Bulgarians form a similar compact mass in South Ukraine. They knew practically no Ukrainian, though they have adopted many local words into the Bulgarian language, which they have retained. It was decided to use the language as spoken in Bulgaria to-day but to retain any new words with a cultural significance.

The Czech minority is a weak spot. Because their number is very small, the solution of their educational problem entails great expense. There are only 1,500 children, and for these eighty-five sets of textbooks are required.

Besides the above there are ten English groups in the Ukraine, consisting of specialists, workers, and returned *émigrés*. Kiev University trains English teachers, and English textbooks have now been issued in Moscow. There are two English daily papers.

The teaching of languages varies slightly in the Ukraine. For the minorities, a second language, Ukrainian, is introduced in the third school year—that is, at the age of ten—and a third language, Russian, in the fourth year. In the fifth year the native language is dropped, where it is not a Republic language, except for two lessons a week. A foreign language, English or German, is substituted. The former is fast usurping the place of the latter in schools. Unfortunately, there is a great shortage of good English teachers. In the fifth year, at the age of twelve, twelve hours is spent on languages in a six-day week.

There is another minority which deserves mention. They are the gypsies, of whom there are about 61,000 in the Union. Intensive propaganda is being carried on among them to induce them to adopt a settled mode of life. In 1926, by a decree of the Central Executive Committee of the Government, facilities were provided for gypsy farming and horse-breeding. In the towns they form their own industrial artels. There are now three elementary schools in Moscow, others in Smolensk, Vitebsk, and the provinces, using the Romany language. Much difficulty was caused by the lack of teachers and textbooks. As in other cases, the difficulty was overcome, and there are



now gipsy educationists working on these problems. While visiting Narkompros in Moscow in 1982, I was fortunate enough to chance on a conference of gipsy educationists. They discussed school accommodation, equipment, textbooks, dramatic art, and arts education with the Director of the National Minority Department. It was for me a very enlightening experience. These men, some of whom, judging by their appearance, had hardly yet become used to living in a house, had a sure grasp of the whole question, a keen realisation of the obstacles to be overcome, and a deep enthusiasm for the education of their people. The great significance of such a conference can only be realised when one bears in mind the state of degradation and poverty in which they lived, and that they were regarded as pariahs by the rest of the community. When I told a Communist Russian friend who is *au fait* with all that happens in his country about this conference, he laughed outright. That there should be gipsy educationists capable of holding a conference struck him as very funny—presumably as a conference of tramp educationists would strike us. His reaction was very revealing of the conditions in which gipsies had hitherto lived, and the contempt with which they were regarded. To-day they are well on the way to becoming a self-respecting and respected community. Much encouragement is given to their music and drama. The gipsy theatre in Moscow is so popular that it is difficult to secure a seat there.

White Russia was 75 per cent illiterate before the Revolution. By 1982 illiteracy had been eliminated between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five. There are 80 technicums, 82 technical institutes, 27 factory apprentice schools, 12 higher educational institutions, including an agricultural academy and an academy of science. Adult education is very much alive. All this progress was made possible by the considerable financial assistance given to White Russia by the central U.S.S.R. authority.

Buryato-Mongolia (former Trans-Baikalia) was one of the most backward districts educationally. Of the Russian children, 95 per cent attended school; of the Buryat children, 2 per cent attended school. In 1916 Buryato-Mongolia had 48 schools, all of which made baptism a condition of entrance for the Buryat children. In 1981 there were 647 schools, of which 285 were Buryat. Elementary education from eight to twelve years is now complete. Illiteracy, which was universal among adults, has been more than halved, while some villages are entirely literate. There are 37 schools of peasant youth, 16 of which are Buryat. There are about 8,500 students in secondary schools, technicums, and rabfacs, 50 per cent of whom are Buryat.

The introduction of the Latin script has greatly aided the spread of education.

The Udmurt Autonomous Region, Daghestan, Tadjikistan, they all present the same picture of great educational achievement, of a liberation of intellectual and artistic capacities hitherto unchained, of limitless opportunity for the development of every individual.

It should not be assumed that the standard as yet attained is everywhere high. On the contrary, there are districts where achievement still falls very far short of the programme as planned. There are still many teachers among the national minorities whose qualifications are no higher than four years' elementary school. As recently as 1982 there were instances reported where the school was one room with an earthen floor, with no desks, and not even benches for the children to sit on. They received their instruction squatting on their haunches. Probably in these particular instances such conditions no longer exist, but there may still be similar ones. All these shortcomings are well known to the central authorities, but there has not yet been time for the proper training of sufficient teachers, for the building and equipping of sufficient schools. Seventeen years is a very little while in the history of a nation. The time required for the elimination of all the defects becomes progressively shorter—considerably less than the 125 years which were stated by the Tsarist Ministry of Education to be required for the establishment of universal education in the Russian language.

Since concluding the foregoing pages I have received reports on the cultural development of the different Republics, which were made at the Congresses of Soviets of these Republics in 1985. (Note: There is an All-Union Congress of Soviets for the whole of the U.S.S.R. territory, and there are Republic Congresses of Soviets for each Republic. The All-Russian Congress of Soviets includes only the territory of the R.S.F.S.R.) Every speaker begins by pointing out achievements and successes which are everywhere considerable, and concludes by indicating failures and shortcomings. The criticism is particularly severe from representatives of the Asiatic Republics like Turkestan and Azerbaidjan. As I have stated elsewhere, this awareness of shortcomings, their admission in public, is always the first step to their removal.

If progress continues at its present rate, it will not be many years before the condition of education in what were once backward areas will compare very favourably with that in the more advanced Republics.

At the sixteenth Congress of Soviets of the R.S.F.S.R., the  
U

president of the Council of People's Commissars reported that in 1985 there were over 1,800,000 students in higher educational and higher technical institutes. In the last two years over two million students were admitted, and 600,000 specialists have qualified. All the towns now had seven-year schools, while in the villages the percentage varied from 50 per cent to 90 per cent. They now had over 200,000 pupils in the ten-year schools. Literacy, which in 1981 was 65 per cent, had now reached 92 per cent.

In the Tatarsk Autonomous Republic there were, in 1984, 3,454 primary and secondary schools, where 50 per cent of the teaching was in the native language. There were 87 technicums, 11 rabfacs, and 12 higher educational and technical institutes. By 1987 it was hoped to have at least one ten-year school in every district, and to abolish the two-shift system.

Chouvashia showed a great improvement over 1980. Whereas in that year they had only achieved the four-year school for all children, in 1984 the seven-year school had become general. It had 4 higher education institutes, with over 2,500 students. Illiteracy is on the way to being eliminated. In a country where before the Revolution hardly anyone received any kind of education, at the present moment one out of every three persons was learning.

Kalmykya had made great strides with eliminating illiteracy. In 1914 literacy was 2.8 per cent, and in 1984 it was 86 per cent, while all its children between eight and twelve were at school.

Karelia, besides compulsory primary education, has 30 secondary schools, 4 higher education institutes, and 10 scientific research institutes. Here over one-fourth of the population is receiving education. There is a national theatre and cinemas; tens of thousands of newspapers and journals are circulated in the native language, while the publishing house "Kiria" issues more literature in Finnish than does Finland itself.

Kazakstan, which with the above territories makes the R.S.F.S.R., reported that it now had 12 higher education institutes and many technicums. Primary education was now compulsory everywhere, including the far-distant Kazak aóuls. There was a rapid growth of a native intelligentsia, particularly in technical qualifications. Since 1980 they had established two national theatres.

At the White Russian Congress of Soviets it was reported that already in 1982 the seven-year school was general in the Republic. The president produced figures which showed the great advance that had been made in White Russia. In 1928 there were 5,529 schools, with 488,000 pupils, and in 1984 there were 7,105 schools, with

857,000 pupils. In 1985, 979,000 children were at school, while there were 18 higher education institutes and 81 technicums. In the last four years (1981-84), 8,848 specialists had been trained in higher education institutes and 10,486 in technicums. There were 6,940 students in pedagogical technicums and 4,400 in pedagogical institutes, and research work is being carried on in twenty-six different scientific institutes. The pre-school sector of education had been receiving much attention, and 50 per cent of the children under eight were now receiving education, 38,000 town children attending some pre-school institution or other. It was decided to make a drive to embrace the full 100 per cent of children under eight.

Adult education had particularly advanced in the villages, which were served by 1,452 reading-rooms. There were 286 clubs and regional Houses of Culture, 2,403 libraries, and 296 newspapers published. In the last year there were ten million copies of papers and journals issued.

From the Ukraine Republic came a report of a great improvement in the standard of education and the quality of the teaching consequent on an increase in the facilities for higher education. Whereas before the Revolution there were 18 higher education institutes, there were now 147; technicums had increased from 18 to 542, and rabfacs from zero to 87. There were 86 theatres, of which 59 were Ukrainian, 17 Russian, and 6 Jewish, as well as 100 model cinemas for the villages.

The Transcaucasian Federative Republic reported even greater progress, because it was in 1914 more backward. In Azerbaidjan the president stated that education was now being given in fourteen languages. The Commissar for Education reported that since 1981 there had been an increase of 58.8 per cent in the number of children attending primary schools. Of this number, Tyurk children had increased from 148,000 to 240,000, the increase for girls being from 42,000 to 99,000. This increase in girl pupils is a very great achievement, as it necessitated the breaking down of much stronger prejudices than in the case of boys. They had now created conditions which would make the introduction of the seven-year school possible, not only in Baku, but in the provinces. Schools had increased from 259 in 1981 to 822 in 1984. They had just completed the new alphabet in the Tsakhoursk language, and elementary readers and textbooks were being prepared.

In the Armenian Congress of Soviets it was reported that in 1984 there were 1,481 schools, with 214,500 pupils, 9 higher education institutes, and 48 technicums, with several thousand students.

Literacy was approaching 95 per cent, while in many districts it had reached 100 per cent. They could report considerable achievement in science, art, and literature. Minority groups such as Tyurks and Kurds were receiving education in their native language, as well as having their own newspapers. There were 88 Kurd schools, with 8,400 pupils, and 215 Tyurk schools, with 21,000 pupils.

Georgia, too, reported good progress since the last Congress in 1981. Between that date and 1984, 275,000 illiterates had been taught to read and write, literacy having reached 91·2 per cent. Here there was also great development in pre-school education, 88,500 children attending institutions of some kind in 1983-84. In 1921-22 there were only 1,800 children receiving such education.

There had been an increase in newspapers from 55 in 1981 to 160 in 1984. While under the Menshevik régime the publishing houses issued between 90 and 140 books a year, in 1984 there were published between 1,800 and 1,400 books—Russian, Georgian, and foreign classics, as well as contemporary literature.

Uzbekistan made a brave statistical show at its congress:

|   | 1981               | 1984      |
|---|--------------------|-----------|
| Primary school pupils .. .. .               | 819,000            | 501,000   |
| Seven-year school pupils .. .. .            | 16,000             | 27,000    |
| Higher education institute students .. .. . | 2,800              | 4,400     |
| Technicum students .. .. .                  | 7,900              | 9,800     |
| Rabfacs students .. .. .                    | 8,000              | 7,700     |
| Illiteracy points .. .. .                   | (no figures given) | 491,000   |
| Students of all kinds, including scholars   | 964,000            | 1,217,000 |

Literacy had advanced from 5 per cent in 1914 to 66 per cent in 1984, and 92 per cent of the child population was at school.

There had been a great increase in native teachers; in primary schools they constituted 88 per cent, in technicums 77·6 per cent, and in higher education institutes 49·8 per cent of the staff. The achievements in the arts have been considerable; 50 theatres, 19 stationary and 81 travelling, of which 47 are in the native tongue, are now running. There is a very promising group of native artists. The Press, which in the native language was non-existent in 1914, has now become a potent factor in the life of the people, who could buy 210 newspapers in 1984. The president of Uzbekistan, Feisulla Khodjhaev, stressed the tasks that lay ahead, the most immediate of which were proper school buildings and equipment. The Commissar for Education reported that the percentage of children at school had risen from 1·2 in 1914 to 92 in 1984, the pupils numbering 501,000. The greatest achievement was in respect of girl pupils, where the increase had

been from 21 per cent in 1924 to 47 per cent in 1984. A matter for pride was the fact that of the 1,892,000 illiterates who had been made literate, 88.5 per cent were women.

Turkestan's vice-president reported that from a most backward nation they were well on the way to becoming an educated cultured Republic. When the difficulties of the existing nomadic conditions were taken into account, the 59.9 per cent literacy which had been achieved was something they might be proud of. There was now a network of primary schools in the towns and auls. The Press now reached every corner of the Republic, books and papers being demanded by the worker in the factory and machine-tractor station as well as by the peasant in his kolkhoz. Some 12,500 students were now receiving secondary and higher education. There were 118 technicums and 5 higher education institutes. The increase in schools and pupils is as given below.

| <i>Dec. 1980</i>   |       |          | <i>Dec. 1984</i> |          |
|--------------------|-------|----------|------------------|----------|
|                    |       | Pupils   |                  | Pupils   |
| Primary schools .. | 1,080 | 69,184   | 1,849            | 115,214  |
| Seven-year schools | 67    | 7,125    | 89               | 10,892   |
| Ten-year schools.. | 6     | 601      | 15               | 10,726   |
|                    |       | Students |                  | Students |
| Technicums ..      | 83    | 5,640    | 118              | 6,578    |
| Institutes ..      | 4     | 576      | 5                | 1,262    |
| Rabfacs ..         | 7     | 985      | 22               | 1,241    |

There was a great improvement in the schools generally. For example, in the Tedzhensky District in the Kolkhoz Belim there were 106 children in the primary school, and attendance had reached 95 per cent. Very satisfactory progress was made in work and in the acquisition of cultural habits. The school supplied wash-basins, towels, soap, etc. It was well equipped, and well supplied with textbooks and apparatus. Only those who have lived for any length of time in the East will realise the magnitude of these achievements.

Schools like the above were to be found not only in the most advanced districts such as Bairam Alli, Merv, and Chardhui, but in remote places like Erbent, Karlyuk, etc. In the kolkhoz "Commune" in the Karlyuk district all the children are at school, and the attendance is 100 per cent.

Great strides are being made in literature, several authors having been accepted in the Union of Soviet Writers. In 1980 there were twelve newspapers altogether, seven in the national language and five in Russian, while in 1984 there were nine Republic newspapers,

two regional, eight district, and twenty-six issued by the political departments. There remained yet much to be done, but a comparison with pre-Revolution conditions will bring a realisation of the magnitude of their achievement.

A word should be said about the industrial development of the national minorities, even though not strictly within the sphere of a book on education. But without the industrial development, educational development on any scale would be impossible. For years surveying expeditions have been sent out by scientific institutes, by planning commissions, to report on the possibilities of development of these backward areas. On these reports have been based industrial schemes. Now the traveller will find flourishing, if as yet unkempt, towns where before there was an arid waste. More important even than this, the primitive agricultural and pastoral pursuits in which the natives were engaged, and at which they worked so laboriously and endlessly for a bare pittance, have given place to co-operative organisations, and, where necessary, to large-scale industry. The machine is relieving the worker of the back-breaking labour which left him too tired for anything but drink. It is not only increasing the supply of material goods, but is giving him leisure for spiritual development. This industrial development is laying the foundation for cultural development.

## APPENDIX II

### *Time-Tables*

In September 1985, new regulations regarding holidays and new time-tables were introduced.

In all types of schools, the primary, the incomplete secondary, and the secondary, the year begins on September 1st. For classes 1, 2, and 8 the year ends on June 1st, for classes 4 to 7 inclusive the year ends on June 10th, and for classes 8 to 10 inclusive it ends on June 20th.

For rural and urban schools the winter holiday is from December 30th to January 10th inclusive; and the spring holiday for both is six days, for urban schools from March 26th to March 31st, and for rural schools any time between March 26th and April 26th, according to climatic conditions.

In urban schools the year consists of 42 six-day weeks for classes 1, 2, and 8; 48 six-day weeks for classes 4-7 inclusive; and 45 six-day weeks for classes 8-10. In rural schools the length of year is: for the first three classes, 36 seven-day weeks; for classes 4-7 inclusive, 37 seven-day weeks; and for classes 8-10, 38 seven-day weeks.

There are four lessons a day for the first three classes, for class 4 two days a week have five lessons. Class 5 has five lessons on four days and six lessons on one day. Classes 6-10 have five lessons a day with an extra one on two days. The extra lessons are to be used for handwork and manual work,<sup>1</sup> music, drawing, and physical culture. A lesson is forty-five minutes long. The first, third, and fourth breaks are ten minutes each and the second break thirty minutes. In individual cases the second and third breaks may be extended to twenty minutes.

<sup>1</sup> Handwork is work done in the workroom with such materials as paper, cardboard, material, with scissors, knives, etc. Manual work is done in school workshops, with wood and metal, using lathes, benches, machines, etc.



*Specimen Time-Table for Russian Schools*  
(Giving hours for each subject per week)

|     |                                     |         |   | URBAN SCHOOLS  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|-----|-------------------------------------|---------|---|--|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
|     |                                     |         |   | <div>Secondary School</div> <div>Incomplete Secondary</div> <div>Primary</div> |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| No. | Subject                             | Class : |   | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 |
| 1.  | Russian language                    | .. ..   | 9 | 9  | 6  | 6  | 4  | 3  | 2  | 1  | -  | -  | -  |
| 2.  | Literature                          | .. ..   | - | -  | -  | -  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 3  | 4  | -  |
| 3.  | Arithmetic                          | .. ..   | 5 | 5  | 5  | 6  | 4  | 1  | -  | -  | -  | -  | -  |
| 4.  | Algebra, geometry, and trigonometry | .. ..   | - | -  | -  | -  | 1  | 3  | 4  | 4  | 4  | 5  | -  |
| 5.  | Nature study                        | .. ..   | 2 | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  | -  | -  |
| 6.  | History                             | .. ..   | - | -  | 1  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 4  | 4  | 4  | -  |
| 7.  | Geography                           | .. ..   | - | -  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  | -  | -  |
| 8.  | Physics                             | .. ..   | - | -  | -  | -  | -  | 2  | 3  | 3  | 2  | 2  | -  |
| 9.  | Chemistry                           | .. ..   | - | -  | -  | -  | -  | -  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 3  | -  |
| 10. | Geology and mineralogy              | .. ..   | - | -  | -  | -  | -  | -  | -  | -  | -  | 1  | -  |
| 11. | Social science                      | .. ..   | - | -  | -  | -  | 1  | 1  | 1  | -  | -  | -  | -  |
| 12. | Foreign language                    | .. ..   | - | -  | -  | -  | 3  | 3  | 3  | 3  | 3  | 3  | -  |
| 13. | Art                                 | .. ..   | 1 | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | -  | -  | -  | -  | -  |
| 14. | Handwork and Manual work            | .. ..   | 1 | 1  | 1  | 1  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  | -  |
| 15. | Machine Drawing                     | .. ..   | - | -  | -  | -  | -  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | -  |
| 16. | Singing                             | .. ..   | 1 | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | -  | -  | -  | -  | -  |
| 17. | Physical culture                    | .. ..   | 1 | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | -  |
| 18. | Military studies                    | .. ..   | - | -  | -  | -  | -  | -  | -  | -  | 1  | 1  | -  |
|     |                                     |         |   | 20   | 20 | 20 | 22 | 26 | 27 | 27 | 27 | 27 | 27 |

## RURAL SCHOOLS

| Subject                  | Class : | Secondary            |    |       |       |    |    |      |      |    |                  |
|--------------------------|---------|----------------------|----|-------|-------|----|----|------|------|----|------------------|
|                          |         | Incomplete Secondary |    |       |       |    |    |      |      |    |                  |
|                          |         | Primary              |    |       |       |    |    |      |      |    |                  |
|                          |         | 1                    | 2  | 3     | 4     | 5  | 6  | 7    | 8    | 9  | 10               |
| Russian language         | .. 11   | 11                   | 8  | 7     | 5     | 4  | 3  | 2    | -    | -  |                  |
| Literature               | .. ..   | -                    | -  | -     | -     | 3  | 3  | 3    | 3    | 4  | 5                |
| Mathematics              | .. ..   | 6                    | 6  | 6     | 7     | 7  | 6  | 5    | 5    | 5  | 6(7)             |
| Nature study             | .. ..   | 3                    | 3  | 3(2)  | 3     | 3  | 3  | 3    | 3    | 3  | -                |
| History                  | .. ..   | -                    | -  | 1(2)  | 3     | 3  | 3  | 3    | 5    | 5  | 5                |
| Geography                | .. ..   | -                    | -  | 3     | 3     | 3  | 3  | 3    | 3    | 3  | -                |
| Physics                  | .. ..   | -                    | -  | -     | -     | -  | 3  | 4(3) | 4(3) | 3  | 3                |
| Chemistry                | .. ..   | -                    | -  | -     | -     | -  | -  | 2(3) | 2(3) | 3  | 4                |
| Geology and mineralogy   | .. ..   | -                    | -  | -     | -     | -  | -  | -    | -    | -  | 2(1)             |
| Social science           | .. ..   | -                    | -  | -     | -     | 1  | 1  | 1    | -    | -  | -                |
| Foreign language         | .. ..   | -                    | -  | -     | -     | 2  | 2  | 2    | 2    | 2  | 2                |
| Art                      | .. ..   | 1                    | 1  | } 1 } | } 1 } | 1  | 1  | -    | -    | -  | -                |
| Singing                  | .. ..   | 1                    | 1  |       |       | 1  | -  | -    | -    | -  | -                |
| Machine drawing          | .. ..   | -                    | -  | -     | -     | -  | 1  | 1    | 1    | 1  | 1                |
| Handwork and manual work | .. 1    | 1                    | 1  | 1     | 1     | 1  | 1  | 1    | 1    | 1  | 1 (less of work) |
| Physical culture         | .. 1    | 1                    | 1  | 1     | 1     | 1  | 1  | 1    | 1    | 1  | 1                |
| Military studies         | .. ..   | -                    | -  | -     | -     | -  | -  | -    | -    | 1  | 2                |
|                          |         | 24                   | 24 | 24    | 26    | 31 | 32 | 32   | 32   | 32 | 32               |

*Specimen Time-Table for non-Russian Schools*  
(Giving hours for each subject per week)

| URBAN SCHOOLS                          |                |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |      |
|--|----------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|------|
| <i>Secondary</i>                       |                |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |      |
| <i>Incomplete Secondary</i>            |                |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |      |
| <i>Primary</i>                         |                |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |      |
| <i>Subject</i>                         | <i>Class :</i> | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9 10 |
| Native language                        | .. 10          | 7  | 4  | 4  | 4  | 2  | 2  | 1  | -  | -    |
| National literature                    | .. -           | -  | -  | -  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 2  | 2    |
| Russian language                       | .. -           | 4  | 4  | 4  | 5  | 5  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2    |
| Russian literature                     | .. -           | -  | -  | -  | 1  | 1  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2    |
| Arithmetic                             | .. 5           | 5  | 5  | 6  | 4  | 1  | -  | -  | -  | -    |
| Algebra, geometry,<br>and trigonometry | .. -           | -  | -  | -  | 1  | 3  | 4  | 4  | 4  | 5    |
| Nature study                           | .. 2           | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  | -    |
| History                                | .. -           | -  | 1  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 4  | 4  | 4    |
| Geography                              | .. -           | -  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  | -    |
| Physics                                | .. -           | -  | -  | -  | -  | 2  | 3  | 3  | 2  | 2    |
| Chemistry                              | .. -           | -  | -  | -  | -  | -  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 3    |
| Geology and<br>mineralogy              | .. -           | -  | -  | -  | -  | -  | -  | -  | -  | 2    |
| Social science                         | .. -           | -  | -  | -  | 1  | 1  | 1  | -  | -  | -    |
| European language                      | .. -           | -  | -  | -  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2    |
| Arts : music and art..                 | 1              | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | -  | -  | -  | -    |
| Handwork and<br>manual work            | .. 1           | }  | 1  | }  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1    |
| Physical culture                       | .. 1           |    |    |    |    | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1    |
| Machine drawing                        | .. -           | -  | -  | -  | -  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1    |
| Military studies                       | .. -           | -  | -  | -  | -  | -  | -  | -  | 1  | 1    |
|  |                | 20 | 20 | 20 | 22 | 28 | 28 | 28 | 28 | 28   |

## RURAL SCHOOLS

| Subject                  | Class : | Secondary            |      |    |    |    |      |      |    |        |   |
|--------------------------|---------|----------------------|------|----|----|----|------|------|----|--------|---|
|                          |         | Incomplete Secondary |      |    |    |    |      |      |    | 10     |   |
|                          |         | Primary              |      |    |    | 5  | 6    | 7    | 8  |        | 9 |
|                          |         | 1                    | 2    | 3  | 4  |    |      |      |    |        |   |
| Native language          | .. 12   | 9                    | 5    | 4  | 5  | 2  | 2    | 1    | —  | —      |   |
| National literature      | .. —    | —                    | —    | —  | 1  | 1  | 1    | 1    | 1  | 1      |   |
| Russian language         | .. —    | 4                    | 4    | 4  | 5  | 5  | 4    | 2    | 2  | 2      |   |
| Russian literature       | .. —    | —                    | —    | —  | 2  | 2  | 2    | 2    | 2  | 2      |   |
| European language        | .. —    | —                    | —    | —  | —  | —  | —    | 2    | 2  | 2      |   |
| Mathematics ..           | .. 6    | 6                    | 6    | 7  | 7  | 6  | 5    | 5    | 5  | 6(7)   |   |
| Nature study             | .. 3    | 3                    | 2(3) | 3  | 3  | 3  | 3    | 3    | 3  | —      |   |
| History ..               | .. —    | —                    | 2(1) | 3  | 3  | 3  | 3    | 5    | 5  | 5      |   |
| Geography ..             | .. —    | —                    | 3    | 3  | 3  | 3  | 3    | 3    | 3  | —      |   |
| Physics ..               | .. —    | —                    | —    | —  | —  | 3  | 4(3) | 4(3) | 3  | 3      |   |
| Chemistry ..             | .. —    | —                    | —    | —  | —  | —  | 2(3) | 2(3) | 3  | 4      |   |
| Geology and mineralogy   | .. —    | —                    | —    | —  | —  | —  | —    | —    | —  | 2(3)   |   |
| Social science           | .. —    | —                    | —    | —  | 1  | 1  | 1    | —    | —  | —      |   |
| Art and music            | .. 1    | 1                    | 1    | 1  | 1  | 1  | —    | —    | —  | —      |   |
| Handwork and manual work | .. 1    | }                    | 1    | }  | 1  | }  | 1    | 1    | 1  | 1      |   |
| Physical culture         | .. 1    |                      |      |    |    |    |      |      |    |        |   |
| Machine drawing          | .. —    | —                    | —    | —  | —  | 1  | 1    | 1    | 1  | 1      |   |
| Military studies         | .. —    | —                    | —    | —  | —  | —  | —    | —    | 1  | 2      |   |
|                          |         | 24                   | 24   | 24 | 26 | 33 | 33   | 33   | 33 | 32(34) |   |



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